

CHAPTER 83

ENHANCEMENT

Most aesthetic management activities are designed to reduce the adverse impact of some timber management project. In some situations, however, management actions can actually enhance the existing level of forest aesthetics.

While it is important that such opportunities not be overlooked, it is equally important that the forest manager limit these activities to areas of actual need. Personal bias should not be satisfied at taxpayer expense.

REDUCTION OF TUNNEL EFFECT

In many heavily forested areas, a continuous tunnel-like condition can be created along roadways. Natural species and size diversity within most stands results in an attractive visual scene. In some cases, however, large single-species monotypes exist, particularly in jack pine areas and where large blocks of red pine have been established. These areas have very little species and size diversity and can become very monotonous. See Figures 83.1 and 83.2.

REDUCTION OF "FIBER FACTORY" EFFECT

Many times plantation rows are oriented perpendicular to the roadway, resulting in an artificial "fiber factory" appearance. This effect is often intensified by row thinning.

As shown in Figure 83.3, by selectively harvesting a strip along the road, the artificial appearance of a plantation can be reduced. Often this can be done in conjunction with a row thinning of the main stand.

In order to avoid creating additional problems of this kind in the future, integrated resource management is paramount in plantation design. One must keep in mind many of the concepts expressed in this chapter and consider the proposed plantation's effect on wildlife habitat, aesthetics, insect and disease problems, etc., and design accordingly.

- Use terrain opportunities to create a more natural appearance. Plant on the contour when appropriate.
- Avoid planting rows perpendicular to roads. Reduction of "fiber factory" appearance occurs when rows are parallel to roads or contoured.
- Frost pockets, odd corners, and other site conditions not readily suitable for forest cover should be left unplanted to improve game habitat, variety, vistas, etc.
- Larger plantations creatively laid out and planted over a period of years will have a more natural appearance and cultural activities will have less impact on the aesthetics due to stand layout and age distribution. Planting over a period of years will also reduce the risk of failure due to weather.

VISTAS

Opportunities to add attractive openings along a roadway, as shown in Figure 83.4, should be considered where opportunities exist, especially in heavily forested areas.

Existing aesthetics can often be improved by opening up small kegs, lakes, rock outcrops, etc., to form small vistas.

Often these projects can be completed in conjunction with normal sale activity with minimal additional effort.

When opening up vistas on large rivers and lakes, caution must be exercised to protect the visual impact for viewers looking back from the water. In such cases, brushing or thinning should be considered.

INCREASING DIVERSITY

For years we have heard that "variety is the spice of life". One of the attributes of the forest that results in its overall aesthetic value is its infinite diversity.

Management activities should, at the very least, maintain the existing level of diversity. Moreover, they should enhance it where feasible. All potential sources of diversity should be considered:

- **Physical diversity.** Timber management work can make any present non-vegetative components (rock outcrops, lakes, small potholes, etc.) a part of the forest scene.
- **Ecotype diversity.** Non-timbered vegetative communities (grass openings, bogs, flowering shrubs, etc.) can also be highlighted by a judicious timber harvest.
- **Timber diversity.**
 - *Type diversity.* Management should reflect the natural scene. All aspen stands along roadsides should not be converted to northern hardwoods, for example.
 - *Species diversity.* Avoid reduction in species diversity, especially in visual enhancement areas (VEA's). Use species designation as a removal tool cautiously. Mark where possible. Where management prescriptions call for a clearcut for regeneration purposes, consider leaving clumps of residual non-objective species (oak clumps, sentinel white pines, etc.). This is illustrated in Figure 83.5.
 - *Form and size diversity.* The tendency to favor well-formed trees of a similar target diameter should be avoided in visual enhancement areas. Cull, and other deformed trees add variety to the stand. Small diameter, understory trees as well as large scattered "wolf" trees may not contribute positively to desired stand structure, but do add diversity in terms of size and scale, thus presenting a more natural scene.

Because of the vastly different objectives and criteria used in tree selection, basal area determination, and understory treatment, it is suggested that VEA's be marked separately and not in conjunction with the main sale area. It is very difficult to shift back and forth between different marking criteria time after time, as one continues to leave and reenter the visual enhancement area, as shown in Figure 83.6.

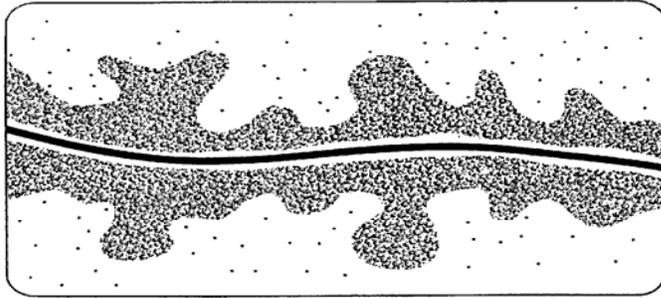
PLANTING

The introduction of a species native to the area, but uncommon in a particular location, may be very effective in a given situation. This may be accomplished as part of a site conversion activity or on a smaller scale to enhance diversity.

The introduction of even one or two pine or spruce trees can greatly enhance the appearance of a campground in a scrub oak monotype. The introduction of a few oak or maple would likely do the same in a campground situated in a red pine or jack pine monotype.

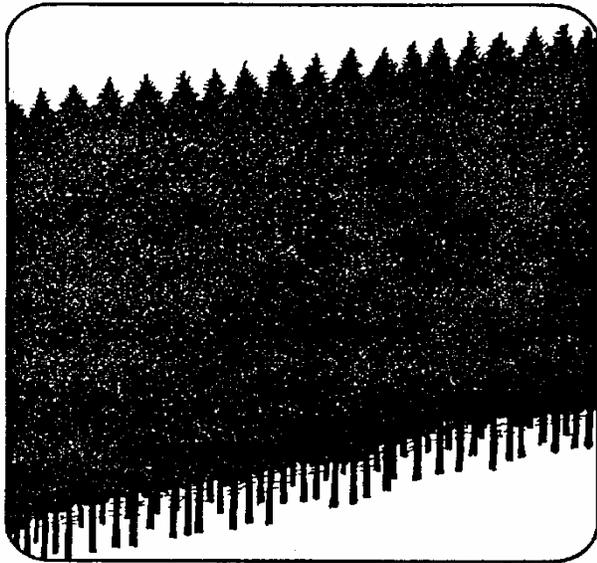
For maximum effectiveness, try to establish as large a tree as possible, using a tree spade or other transplanting device. Planting to increase diversity is very expensive, however, and should be done with careful thought.

Figure 83.1 Reduction of the "tunnel effect".

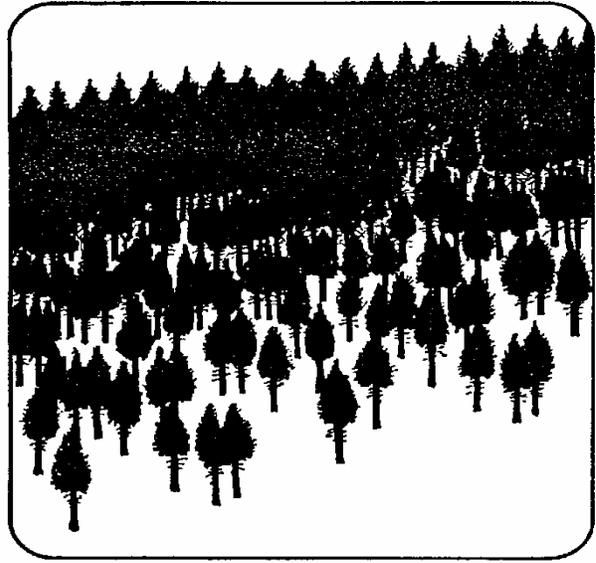


In this example, a visual enhancement area has been created in an immature stand. The cut area is set back from the road and regenerated with a long-lived species like red pine. When the area is established, the residual strip along the road is cut and managed as an opening. This approach can be used in very sensitive areas where a long-term solution is needed.

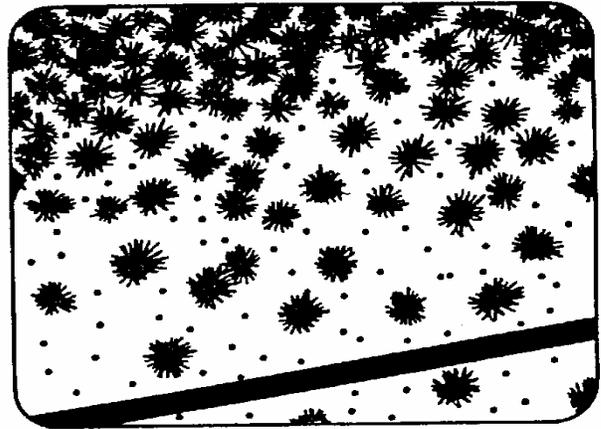
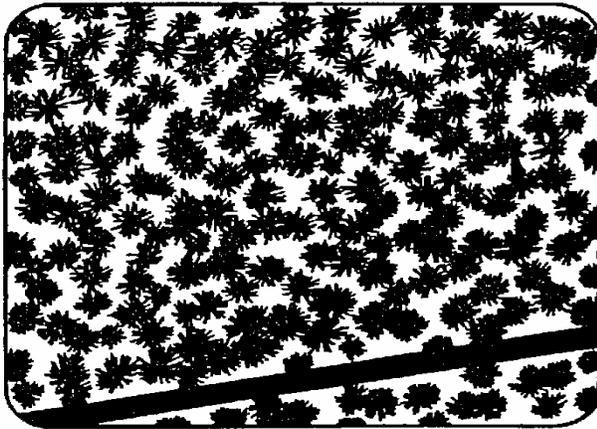
Figure 83.2 Reduction of "tunnel appearance".



BEFORE



AFTER



In order to reduce the "tunnel appearance" of some pine stands, the basal area can be gradually reduced as you approach the road. This will give the stand a "feathered" appearance. The visual penetration will be increased and the "closed-in" feeling will be reduced. The area can then be managed as is to accelerate diameter growth for "big tree management" (e.g., red pine) or underplanted (e.g., jack pine).

Figure 83.3 Reducing the "fiber factory" appearance.

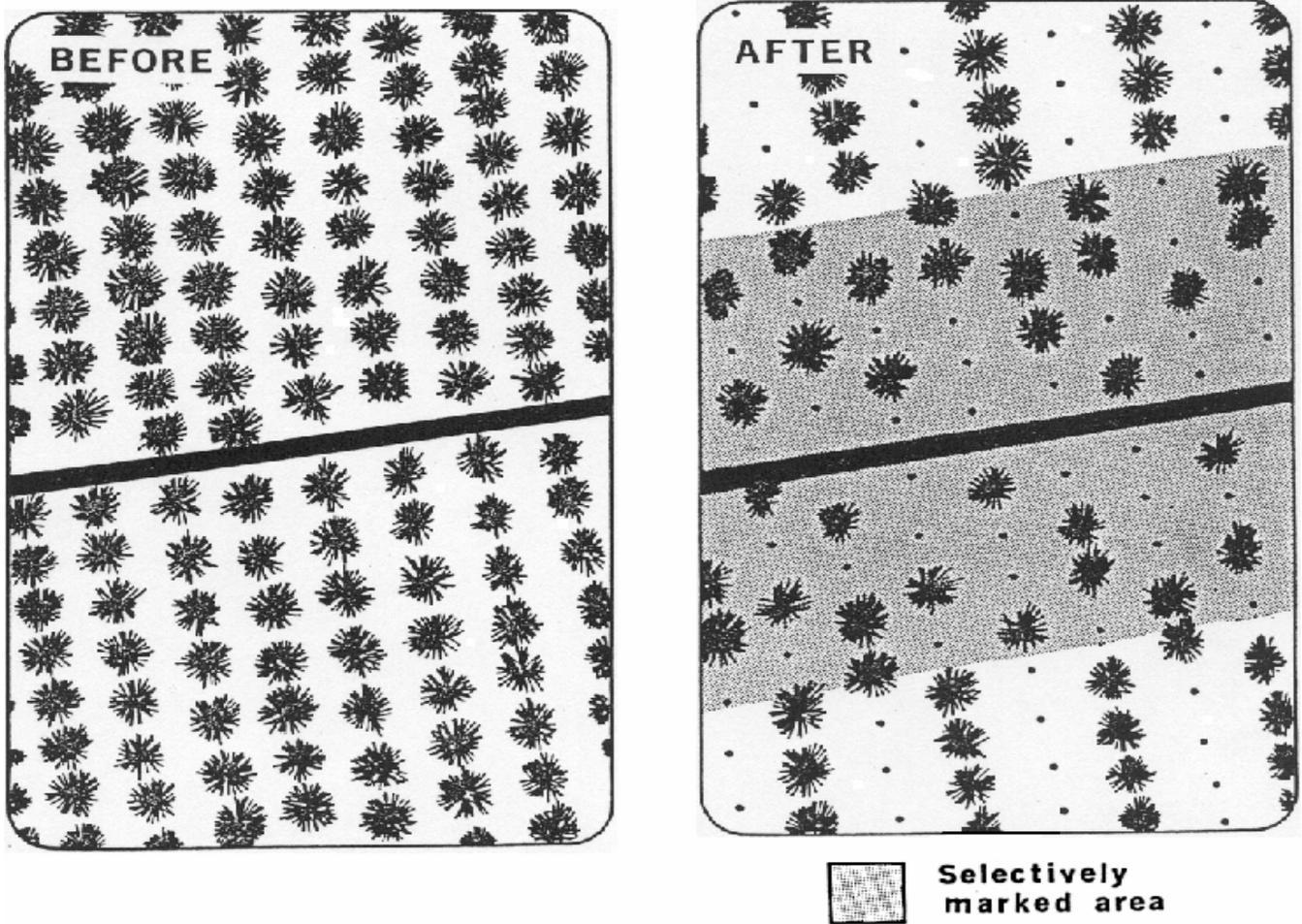


Figure 83.4 Vista creation.

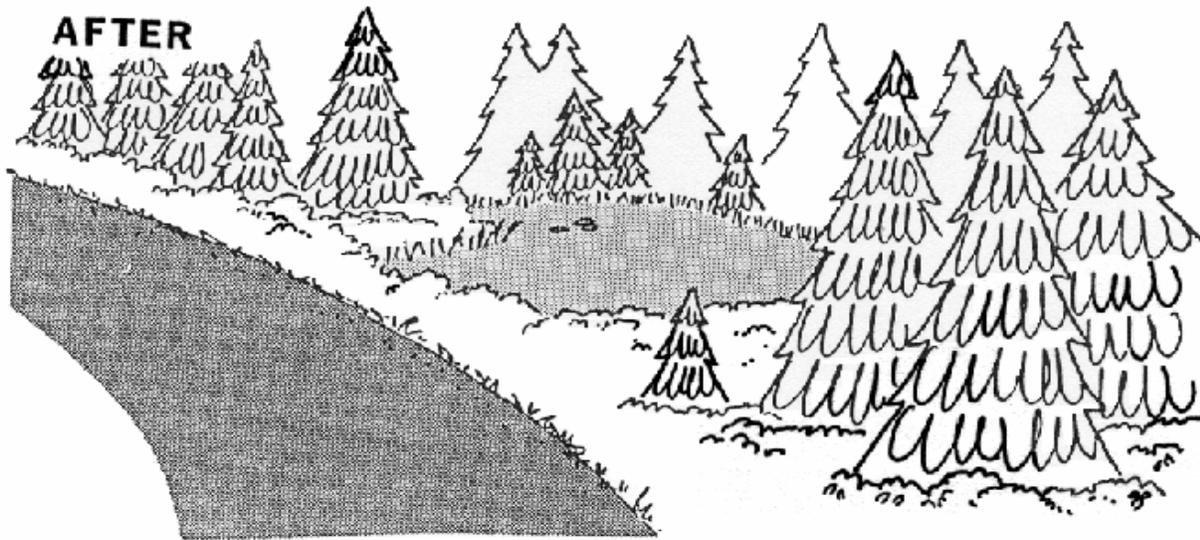
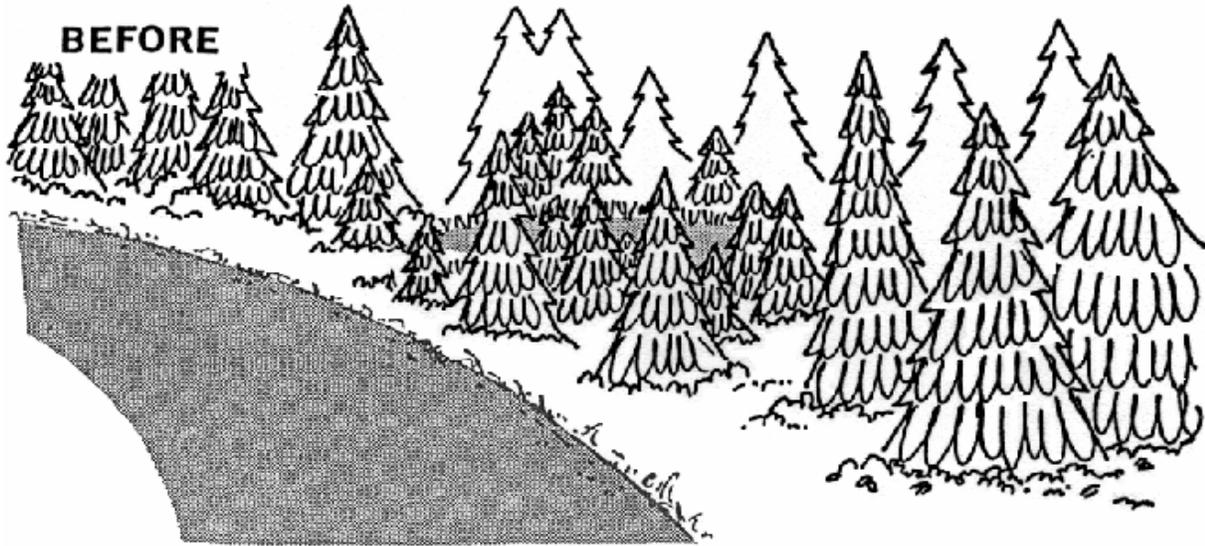
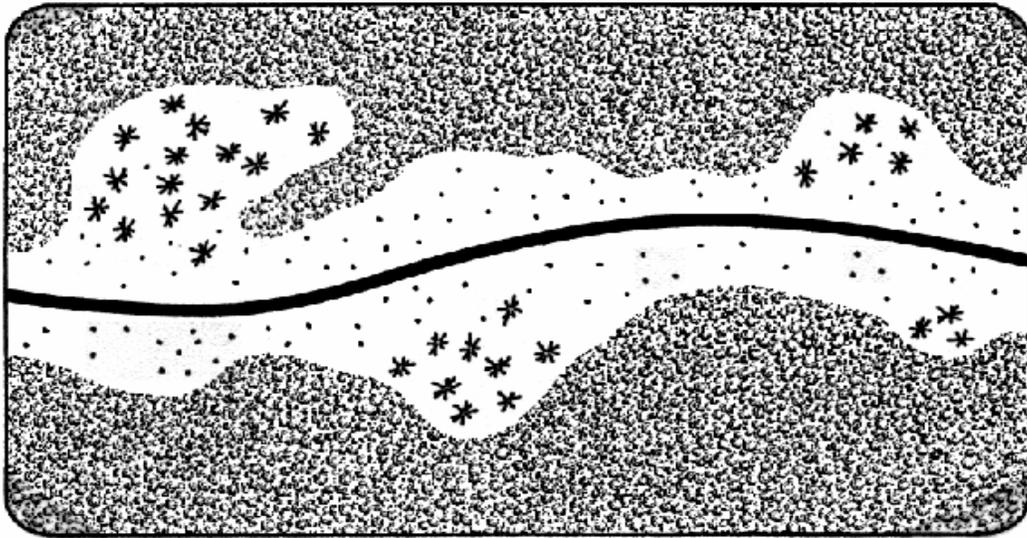


Figure 83.5 Enhancing diversity through marking.



Species diversity can be increased through judicious marking. Above, clumps of long-lived species were retained. Below, individual trees were retained. Both techniques will enhance roadside aesthetics by increasing diversity.

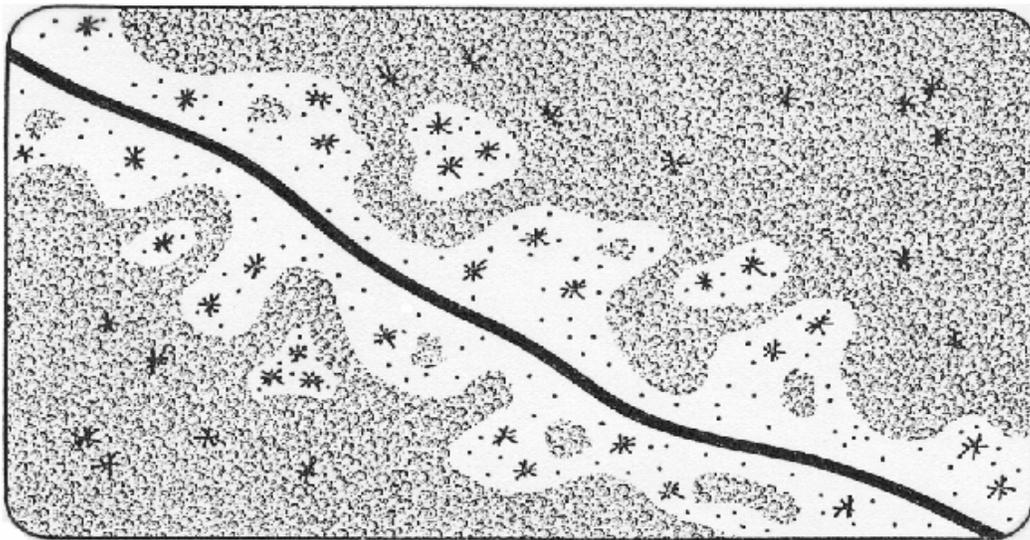
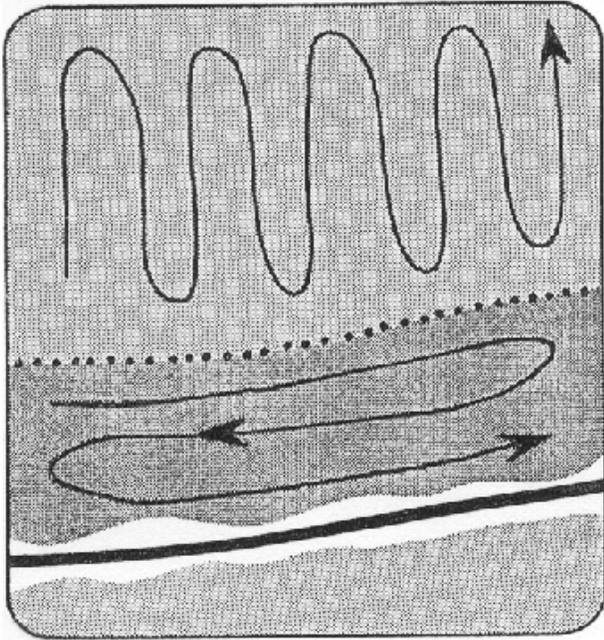
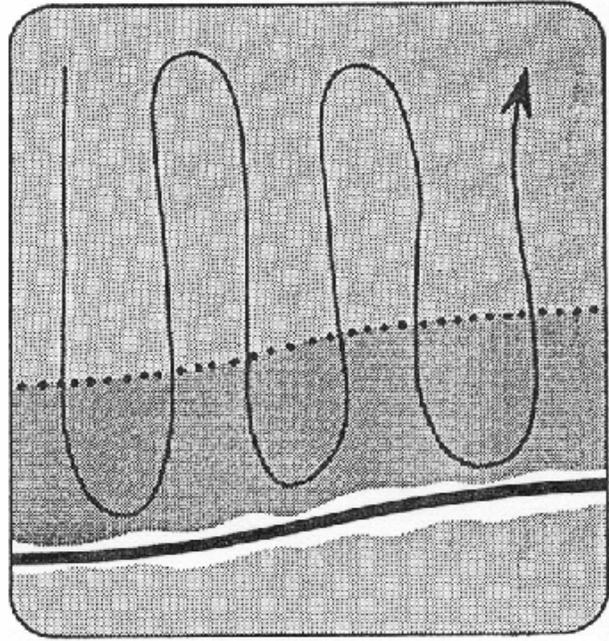


Figure 83.6 Marking techniques.



To avoid problems with constantly changing marking criteria, mark visual enhancement areas separately...



not as part of the same stand.