

Subject: CMER review of ISPR-approved Study Design  
Reviewer: Douglas Martin  
Date: March 15, 2021

I have reviewed the ISPR comments and the ISPR-revised Study Design. The revisions generally addressed the ISPR major concerns including the recommendation for a field implementation trial. However, the ISPR panel did not comment on:

1. Utility or practical usefulness of proposed thinning treatments (e.g., relative density) as they may or may not apply to current thinning practices,
2. Analytical suitability of proposed thinning (RD20, RD40) for interpreting (modeling) shade curve over response range.
3. The implementation method for treatments to achieve consistency (i.e., retained basal area, canopy cover) among replicates within each treatment.

The RCS design borrowed the proposed thinning prescriptions from the Siskowet draft Study Design. Although treatment/implementation options were discussed by RCS TWIG, the Siskowet proposal was retained with assumption that critical issues, if any, would be captured by ISPR.

The thinning design/implementation are critical components of RCS that will influence both implementation and outcomes of the proposed study. Given that the ISPR did not comment on specifics of thinning proposal (e.g., items 1-3), I can only assume that the ISPR panel did not include silvicultural research expertise. Therefore, I am concerned that CMER approval of the ISPR revision may lead to problems that could have been avoided had the design been reviewed by a silviculture scientist. Further, that a silviculture scientist be asked to address specific questions (e.g., items 1-3) in addition to the standard review list.