



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Nez Perce National Forest
104 Airport Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
208-983-1950

Clearwater National Forest
12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
208-476-4541

File Code: 1950
Date: October 25, 2011

Dear Planning Participant,

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering a number of project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. A separate decision will be made on each individual proposal. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments so they can be included in our analysis. Proposals are included in Part A or Part B (attached) based on their appeal eligibility and comment requirements.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests have made a preliminary assessment that these proposals fall within categories of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. Brief project descriptions are included below. If you are interested in submitting a comment on any of these projects, please follow the instructions below.

Thank you for your interest in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

RICK BRAZELL
Forest Supervisor

Attachments:

Part A: Non-Appealable Projects

Part B: Appealable Projects



PART A: NON-APPEALABLE PROJECTS

Introduction

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering the following 17 project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis. These decisions are not subject to appeal.

How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about these proposals and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us for the **Hunt Creek Culvert Replacement, Gold Lake Creek Placer Exploration, Pioneer Gulch Placer Exploration, Rex Placer Exploration, Sing Lee Campground Improvements, Bridge Creek Campground and Trailhead Improvements, Five Mile Fishing Pond and Campground Improvements, Magruder Road Corridor Parking Area Improvements, Deadwood Quickdraw Exploration Drilling, Lone Pine Lode Exploration, Pasadena/Frank Peck Lode Exploration, Crane Special Use Permit Issuance, Forest Road 5503/5503A Road Easement, Cedars Campground Improvements, Vassar Restitution, Sandy Rock Potlatch Road Use Permit Issuance, and Tailhold Special Use Permit Issuance** projects.

To assure your written comments are fully considered during the analysis of this project, please submit your comments by November 30, 2011. Comments submitted after that date will be accepted, but our ability to respond effectively could be reduced. Please note that all comments received will be included in the public record; therefore, names and addresses of participants cannot be kept confidential [7 CFR Part 1 Subpart B 1-27(c)].

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding these projects, please feel free to contact Suzanne Acton or Marty Gardner at the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests office in Grangeville or call (208) 983-1950. Written comments should be submitted to Marty Gardner, NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce-Clearwater Forests Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (PST), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

Project Proposals

Salmon River Ranger District

Hunt Creek Culvert Replacement

Legal Description: T28N R3E Section 7

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(4) Repair and maintenance of roads, trails and landline boundaries and 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(7) Modification or maintenance of stream or lake aquatic habitat improvement structures using native materials or normal practices.

Narrative Summary: The Salmon River Ranger District and the Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Resource Management Watershed Division propose to replace one culvert located on Forest Road 309 at Milepost 18.2 in the Mill Creek drainage of the South Fork Clearwater River watershed, to provide for fish and other aquatic species passage and reduce the risk of failure. The project would occur during the low water flow period generally between July 1st and August 15th. Excavators and dump trucks would be used to remove the existing road fill and old culvert at the site. The culvert would be sized to accommodate a minimum of the 100-year stream flow event. After completion of the culvert replacement, the road would be resurfaced and reopened to traffic. Best Management Practices (BMPs) that protect or minimize effects to water quality would be implemented, such as dewatering of the work site, upstream, downstream, and worksite erosion control measures, revegetation of disturbed soils after project completion, and development of an approved erosion control plan, which ensure compliance with the applicable portions of State of Idaho Stream Alterations Act and State of Idaho Water Quality Standards and the *Biological Assessment for Stream Crossing Structure Replacement and Removal Activities Affecting ESA-listed Species in Idaho National Forests (Programmatic BA)* (June 9, 2005). Necessary permits would be obtained prior to implementation.

Work at this site would require temporary closure of Forest Road 309. Past reconstruction work of similar size and scope resulted in road closures of approximately three weeks. Delays in public travel on this road at this site during construction could be expected.

Currently the culvert is inadequately sized in accordance with Forest Plan Amendment 20 to accommodate 100 year flow events, inclusive of organic material. The outlet of the pipe is significantly elevated vertically off of the natural stream bottom and is a complete passage barrier to upstream movement of fish. Dependent upon funding availability, work could occur during the summer of 2012 or 2013.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Garry Seloske (USDA Forest Service) at (208) 839-2134 or Mark Johnson (Nez Perce Tribe) at (208) 621-3561.

Gold Lake Creek Placer Exploration

Legal Description: T25N R3E Section 1

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary: The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to approve Charles Bedrosian's proposal to conduct a small placer mining operation in the Gold Lake Creek drainage of the Salmon River Ranger District. The proposal is for six or seven test pits. These pits would be excavated to bedrock or slightly below depending on the composition of the bedrock using a suction nozzle and sluice box combination to draw material out of the test pit and move it to the sluice box, where gold would be separated from the gravels. The size of these pits would be the minimum required for safe entry and would depend on the depth. The pits would be backfilled as work is completed. The surface would then be recontoured and the area seeded and mulched, as appropriate. A small rubber or steel tracked excavator would be used for backfilling the pits and for other needed tasks such as moving down timber and boulders.

Required water would be pumped out of Gold Lake Creek as needed, and would be recirculated to minimize the need for constant withdrawal from the stream. Small settling ponds of impoundments would be used to hold process water for recycling. Excess water, if any, may be land applied to avoid overtopping of the impoundments and to minimize the risk of a discharge into any stream or wetland. Appropriate mitigation measures would be employed to ensure that disturbance of or discharges into streams and wetlands would be avoided.

The project area would be accessed by Forest Roads 221 and 9330. Minor maintenance of Forest Road 9330 may be required for access to the project site. Overland travel would be required for transportation of equipment and machinery to each test pit. No road construction is anticipated.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Pioneer Gulch Placer Exploration

Legal Description: T25N R4E Sections 7 and 18

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary: The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to approve David Tisch's proposal to excavate up to 22 test pits for the purpose of testing placer gravels for mineral values in the Ozark Creek drainage. These test pits would be dug with a track mounted excavator and would be sized a maximum of 12 feet by 12 feet to a maximum depth to bedrock. Material would be processed with a trailer mounted 10 to 15 yard per hour capacity wash plant. Processed material and water would be discharged back into the pit. Process water would initially be drawn from Ozark Creek, and would be recirculated from the test pit and reused. An appropriate buffer would be maintained between any surface disturbance and streams or wetland areas.

Some dead and down timber may be removed for access and safety. A number of small trees may need to be removed. These would be cut down and piled to one side, then scattered about the immediate area and left in place when work is finished.

When finished, each pit would be refilled with material, topsoil would be replaced, and the affected area would be reseeded. Only one pit would be open at a time. This technique would preclude the need for discrete settling ponds and would minimize the amount of reclamation bond required.

Equipment used in the operation includes an excavator, wash plant, a track mounted skid steer, ATVs and a pickup. A camper or motor home would be used for living quarters, and would be parked at the old airstrip, along with cargo trailers. Access would be by existing roads and trails. No roads or trails would be constructed for this project.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Rex Placer Exploration

Legal Description: T25N R3E Section 12

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary: The Salmon River Ranger District proposes to approve Robert Martin's proposal to excavate 17 placer test pits in the Gold Lake Creek and Ozark Creek drainages. These pits would be ten by ten feet or ten by twelve feet wide down to bedrock, if possible. Material would be processed by first excavating all material from a pit, separating it by layers (topsoil, overburden, pay material, etc), and then processing material with a G1 recirculating sluice which recirculates process water through a large tub. No settling ponds would be necessary. Process water would initially be drawn from Gold Lake Creek or Ozark Creek, then would be recirculated from the tub and reused.

When finished, the pit would be refilled with material, topsoil would be replaced, and the affected area would be reseeded. Only one pit would be open at a time. This technique precludes the need for discrete settling ponds and minimizes the amount of reclamation bond required. Reclamation would be concurrent with the operation. As testing is completed at each pit, it would be reclaimed, recontoured, and seeded and mulched as needed.

The equipment used would be a small rubber tired Kubota backhoe/loader and a G1 recirculating sluice. ATVs with trailers would be used to access the project area and to transport equipment and supplies as needed. Access would be by existing roads and trails. No new road or trail reconstruction would be required.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Red River Ranger District

Sing Lee Campground Improvements

Legal Description: T29N R7E Section 6

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to improve dispersed camping opportunities adjacent to the Sing Lee Campground by hardening and graveling approximately ten dispersed sites between the road and Newsome Creek. Additionally, rock barriers, tables with benches, and fire rings would be installed at the Sing Lee Campground.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2110.

Bridge Creek Campground and Trailhead Improvements

Legal Description: T28N R10E Sections 10 and 11

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to improve recreational opportunities by renovating the Bridge Creek Campground and Butter Creek and Otterson Trailheads. The District would expand the campground by installing four additional units along an old graveled road, and would replace the existing outhouse and riparian area fence. Additionally, at the Butter Creek and Otterson Trailheads across from the Bridge Creek Campground, the District would improve the dispersed sites by repairing hitch racks and stock feeders.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2110.

Five Mile Fishing Pond and Campground Improvements

Legal Description: T28N R7E Section 36

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to improve recreational opportunities by upgrading the five unit Five Mile Campground with newer and accessible features and improving the adjacent fishing pond. Campground improvements include installing rock barriers, tables with benches, and fire rings, and regravelling the tent pads.

At the fishing pond, improved access to fishing would be provided by constructing a fishing pier. The pond drainage and inlet would also be modified to provide for fish passage. Currently the

gate at outlet prevents fish from leaving. Additionally, two to three picnic tables, barbeque grills, and fire rings would be installed. To improve access to the site, the parking area would be expanded and graveled to accommodate additional vehicles. Due to drainage issues in the dispersed use area, a culvert would be installed along the road by the outhouse. Additionally, the approximately ten foot by ten foot area of site tailing barriers would be spread out across the site to provide additional usable area.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2110.

Magruder Road Corridor Parking Area Improvements

Legal Description: T27N R9E Sections 3 and 4

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to improve parking near the Red River Ranger Station at the Magruder Road Corridor parking area. The current parking area would be expanded by approximately 1200 square feet and paved, and parking delineated to use the space more efficiently. Access to potable water would be improved by installing a frost-free hydrant. Continued access to a recreational vehicle sanitation dump and outhouse would be maintained.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2110.

Deadwood Quickdraw Exploration Drilling

Legal Description: T28N R8E Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Premium Exploration's proposal to conduct exploratory drilling in the Deadwood area of the Red River Ranger District at a total of fourteen drill sites. Each drill site would encompass a surface area of approximately 30 feet by 50 feet. A maximum of two holes would be drilled at each site. These holes are anticipated to be 3" in diameter but may be up to 6" in diameter depending on equipment availability, and would be drilled using a self contained, self-leveling, and track mounted drill rig. A sump approximately three feet wide, three to four feet deep, and approximately 20 feet long would be dug at each site to contain drill fluid and to allow drill cuttings to settle out. Drill fluid is comprised of water and a clay derivative. Water for the drill rig would be brought in from off-site in a truck or trailer-mounted tank. Each site would be reclaimed and each drill hole would be filled and plugged when work at that site is completed before moving on to the next drill site.

Most of the drill sites are adjacent to or on existing roads. Three sites are adjacent to Forest Road 522 (Deadwood Road), and are located on turnouts, which could be used as drill pads to minimize surface disturbance and allow the passage of traffic at the same time. Two sites would require overland travel to access, and up to two sites could require some minor road reconstruction, with a maximum of approximately ¼ mile of low standard temporary road

construction to access drill sites. These roads would be recontoured, seeded, and mulched after completion of drilling.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Lone Pine Lode Exploration

Legal Description: T29N R6E Section 27

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Donald Alm's proposal to open an existing adit for the purpose of exploring for gold values. The adit would be opened using a track mounted excavator. Material removed would be stockpiled on an existing waste dump near the mouth of the adit. Once the adit is opened, samples would be taken from within the adit and removed from the site to be assayed. The area would be accessed by ATVs and UTVs for daily transportation. The adit would be left open for future access, and would be secured from public access for safety purposes.

The area is accessed by a low standard road from Golden, Idaho. The first 0.2 mile is on Forest Service system lands. Maintenance would be required on this road including grading and installation of waterbars. Approximately 0.9 mile of the access road passes through patented mining claims owned by Mr. Alm. From the upper end of the private property boundary a simple jeep trail runs 0.47 miles north up the ridgetop to a point approximately 300 feet from the adit. From this point an excavator would be walked overland to the adit, clearing downed dead trees out of the way as needed.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Pasadena/Frank Peck Lode Exploration

Legal Description: T27N R7E Section 12

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than one mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to approve Ralph Reynolds and David Brush's proposal to open an old adit and develop a new adit for the purpose of extracting bulk ore samples for testing and assay.

The caved portal area of the existing adit would be opened and widened to gain access. Excess material would be stockpiled at the existing waste dump. This work would be accomplished with a trackhoe and a dozer. A pad approximately 30 feet by 30 feet would be constructed for the work site, and would be dug slightly into the bank to allow for a flat face for the construction of the portal.

The project site is accessed by Forest Roads 233 (Crooked River Road), 311 (Penman Road), and 9848. Forest Road 9848 would require reconditioning, including grading and widening the road in areas, and the installation of waterbars. An approximately 200 foot segment of road would be constructed to the site from Forest Road 9848, and would be obliterated at end of the project.

All appropriate BMPs for water quality standards and State of Idaho BMPs for mining would be followed. In addition, standard mitigation measures have been developed for mining and would be implemented as appropriate. A reclamation plan would be developed for this project. The bond would be calculated in an amount to cover all reclamation costs and would be posted by the claimant before the operating plan would be approved.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Marty Jones at (208) 983-5158.

Crane Special Use Permit Issuance

Legal Description: T28N R9E Section 19

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Narrative Summary: The Red River Ranger District proposes to issue Michael Crane a special use permit for existing improvements on approximately a 15 by 65 foot area located on National Forest system lands on the Red River Ranger District, north of Dixie, Idaho. Improvements proposed to be permitted consist of a water well, two above ground hydrants, a concrete pit house for a pressure tank, and approximately 75 feet of buried 3/4 inch water line from the well to the pressure tank and from the tank to the property line. No ground disturbance is proposed.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Zilia Lewis at (208) 935-4255.

Lochsa Ranger District

Forest Road 5503/5503A Road Easement

Legal Description: T33N R6E Sections 6 and 7

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (d)(6) Acquisition of land or interest in land; and (e) (3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Narrative Summary: The Lochsa Ranger District proposes to issue a permanent road easement to the Quartzburg Holding Co. LLC to access private property using Forest Roads 5503 and 5503-A. The landowner would grant a reciprocal easement to the Forest Service over the private

portion of Forest Road 5503-A. The gate currently located across Forest Road 5503 at the junction of US Highway 12 would be relocated to the junction of Forest Roads 5503 and 5503-A. Alternate access routes have been explored and exhausted.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Heather Berg at (208) 926-4274.

North Fork Ranger District

Cedars Campground Improvements

Legal Description: T41N R11E Section 28

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities.

Narrative Summary: The North Fork Ranger District proposes to improve recreational opportunities through the repair and upgrade of aging facilities at the Cedars Campground. The Cedars Campground is currently a non-fee site that is heavily used for both fishing access and as an access point to discover and enjoy a variety of district off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails. Not only would implementation of this project provide the recreating public with an enhanced camping experience, but it would also ensure improved protection of area resources (including vegetation and watershed resources). Specific actions include:

- Delineation of campsites through placement of barriers (rock, wood, etc.);
- Installation of fire rings and picnic tables at up to 10 campsites;
- Identification of a campsite for group use;
- Widening of campground access routes to provide for easier Recreational Vehicle (RV) ingress and egress;
- Grading and graveling all site roadways and campsite spurs;
- Upon completion of site review by qualified silviculturist, removal of less than 15 trees that may pose a hazard to both visitors or infrastructure;
- Decommissioning approximately 500' of the interior roadways within the administrative site boundary;
- Changing the site from non-fee to fee with the identified upgrades in campground amenities.

All identified actions would take place within the existing administrative site boundary.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Adam McClory at (208) 875-1734.

Palouse Ranger District

Vassar Restitution

Legal Description: T41N, R2W, Section 36

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(6) Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of low standard road construction.

Narrative Summary: The Palouse Ranger District proposes to repair a meadow after a large group gathering during wet spring conditions damaged the site. These activities are needed to restore the headwater area of Corral Creek, a steelhead stream within the Potlatch River drainage.

Ruts from vehicles would be decompacted by an excavator during dry conditions. Bare areas would be planted with native sedges or grasses. The 100-square feet of fire damage would require ash removal, scarifying soil, and planting meadow vegetation. Vehicular access to the meadow would be blocked by moving downed trees across the access points. Additionally, an informational sign discussing the importance of maintaining upland meadows for steelhead habitat would be posted near the road. Work would occur in 2012.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Meg Foltz at (208) 875-1717.

Sandy Rock Potlatch Road Use Permit Issuance

Legal Description: T41N R2W Section 5

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Narrative Summary: The Palouse Ranger District proposes to issue Potlatch Corporation a road use permit for approximately 2.2 miles on Forest Roads 4784 and 4784A to gain access to their property which begins at the end of Road 4784A for the purpose of harvesting timber. Approximately 100 MBF of saw logs and 100 tons of pulp logs would be harvested. Road maintenance activities such as roadside brush removal, ditch cleaning and road grading would also occur. Access restrictions for the public would not change. The project would last until burning and planting are completed following harvest activities, which are anticipated to be completed by July 2013.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact David Ratliff at (208) 875-1718.

Tailhold Special Use Permit Issuance

Legal Description: T40N R2E Section 25

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Narrative Summary: The Palouse Ranger District proposes to issue a three-year special use permit to Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to use tailholds, an anchorage system at the outer end of the skyline away from the landing for skyline logging operations, for their Omega Pole Timber Sale. Tailhold trees or stumps would be located on Forest Service system lands.

Cable logging operations are planned for portions of this sale and would require tailholds on the north side of an unnamed creek. IDL would harvest timber on their lands using a skyline logging system. They would tie their skyline to trees or stumps on Forest Service system lands when there are no suitable trees on their side of the property line. Trees used as tailhold trees would be protected by plates or straps to adequately prevent scarring to the bole of the tree during use.

Tailhold trees would be approved in advance by the Forest Service and no tailhold trees would be approved that are located within 50 feet of any stream.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Zilia Lewis at (208) 935-4255.

PART B: APPEALABLE PROJECTS

Introduction

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests will be considering the following project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis. These decisions are subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215, as clarified in the court order dated October 19, 2005 by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS.

How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about these proposals and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us. For the ***Pig Foot Sanitation Salvage, Trapper Face Prescribed Burn, Selway Winter Range Improvement, and Granite Fire Salvage*** projects, written, facsimile, hand-delivered and oral comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. One should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments should be submitted to Marty Gardner, NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (PST), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment on the proposal, please include the following: (1) your name, address, and (if possible) your telephone number, and organization represented (if any); (2) title of the project on which you are submitting comments; (3) specific facts and related rationale concerning this project that you feel should be considered. For appeal eligibility, each individual must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Additional information regarding how to comment can be found at 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the available options at that time (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Pig Foot Sanitation Salvage

Introduction

The Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to use ground-based mechanical harvesting to treat 165 acres to control the spread of mountain pine beetle, reduce long term risk of hazardous fuels conditions, and recover economic value prior to complete stand mortality and collapse, located in the vicinity of Pig Foot Springs along Forest Road 243 (Free Use Road) on the Salmon River Ranger District, Nez-Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Idaho County, Idaho at T28N, R3E, Sections 26, 27, 28, 34, and 35 (Boise Meridian) (see attached map).

The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13) Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction.

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to:

- ✓ Control the spread of mountain pine beetle;
- ✓ Reduce long term risk of hazardous fuels conditions; and
- ✓ Recover economic value prior to complete stand mortality and collapse

Forest-wide management direction in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-1 to II-27 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area direction for Management Area (MA) 12 may also apply to this project. This management area provides direction to manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis, develop equal distribution of age classes to optimize sustained timber production, and manage at levels and intensities consistent with the schedules described in the Forest Plan to provide for other multiple uses and resources (p. III-37).

Need

Existing stand conditions exhibit elevated risk of beetle activity due to age class and stocking levels. Mountain pine beetle activity is increasing throughout the project area and is rampant in areas directly adjacent to the proposed project. Isolated lodgepole pine mortality is occurring throughout the project area. Given present conditions and increasing endemic beetle populations, it is expected that entire stand mortality will occur in less than five years.

Proposed Action

The Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to use ground-based mechanical harvesting and commercial utilization of woody material to treat 165 acres. Residual overstory species (western larch, ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir) would be retained in areas to provide opportunities for natural regeneration and snag recruitment. Existing snags would be left on site including any available material required for long term nutrient cycling, coarse woody debris, and habitat improvement. Openings greater than 40 acres may be generated. Trees would be yarded whole, and remaining slash would be jackpot burned. Stands

would be naturally regenerated and some openings greater than five acres could be artificially regenerated.

Up to ½ mile of temporary road would be constructed to facilitate access to the area, and would be obliterated upon project completion. Approximately one mile of road currently open to motorized use would be reconditioned, and then reestablished to its former use following project activities. Pending decision this project would likely be implemented during the fall of 2012 with an estimated completion date of approximately one year. Additionally, the following criteria also apply to this action:

- No harvest would occur within the boundaries of riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCAs).
- This project would meet snag guidelines and down woody debris requirements.
- No changes in current access restrictions are proposed.
- To prevent noxious weed spread, equipment would be cleaned prior to entering Forest Service system lands.

Environmental Issues

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to watershed, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife and potential disruption of wildlife habitats.

Decisions to Be Made

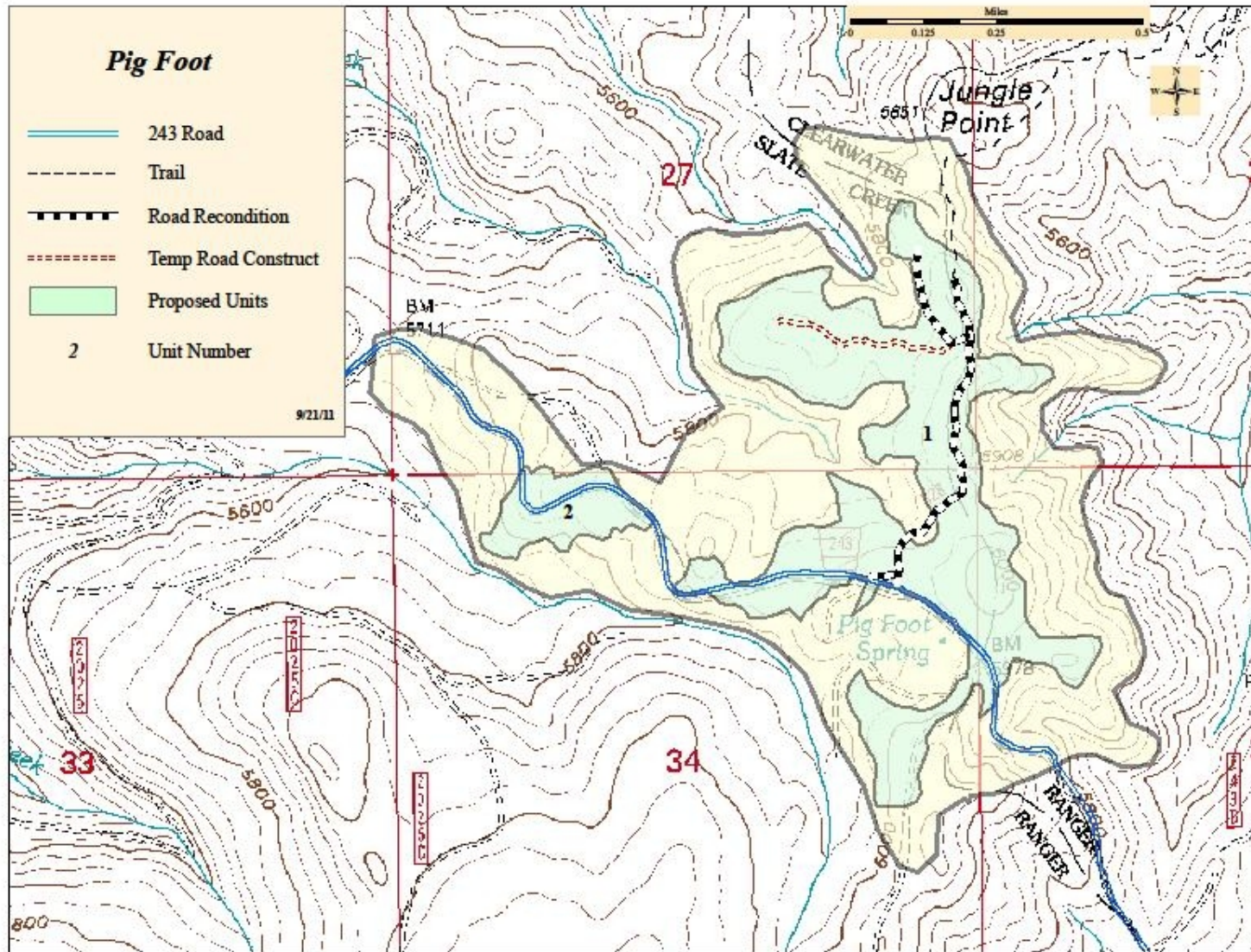
The Salmon River District Ranger is the deciding official for this proposal. The decisions to be made are:

- Whether or not to conduct sanitation/salvage treatments on 165 acres.
- If the area is treated, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

Project Information

If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Ed Koberstein at (208) 983-7010.

Pig Foot Sanitation Salvage Project Map



Trapper Face Prescribed Burn

Introduction

The Red River Ranger District proposes to use mixed-severity prescribed fire to treat approximately 3000 acres in the project area on the Red River Ranger District, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Idaho County, Idaho at T27N R9E Sections 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17 (Boise Meridian) (see attached map).

The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve timber stand conditions and wildlife habitat by reintroducing low to mixed severity fire within the mixed conifer cover types, and reducing fuel loading associated with lodgepole pine mortality from mountain pine beetle.

Forest-wide management direction in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-1 to II-27 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area direction for Management Areas (MA) 12, 13, and 17 may also apply to this project. These management areas provide direction to manage for timber production and multiple uses on a sustained yield basis (MA 12), manage to produce sustained yields of sawtimber while meeting the visual quality objectives (VQO) of partial retention (MA 13), and manage for timber production within the constraints imposed by the VQO of retention or partial retention (MA 17). Additionally, the standard with respect to protection for each management area states that “planned ignitions, when within prescription, will be allowed to burn to enhance resource values”.

This project was, in part, identified in the Red River Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (EAWS) (USDA Forest Service 2003). The EAWS specifically prioritizes reducing risks to aquatic resources and restoring aquatic processes (p. 5-6 to 5-7) and rates the project area as a high priority to reduce fuel hazards within the watershed where extensive lodgepole mortality and multi-story stands of fire sensitive species occur to increase ability to control fire spread and reduce potential fire severity (p. 5-21 to 5-22).

Additionally, in support of proposed efforts, current scientific analyses such as *Forest Structure and Fire Hazard in Dry Forests of the Western United States* (Peterson et al. 2005), *Effects of Fuels Treatment on Wildfire Severity* (Omi and Martinson 2002), and *Is Forest Structure Related to Fire Severity?* (Graham et al. 2004) recommend prescribed burning activities to reduce the long-term fire hazard conditions in the stands and promote a more natural fire regime.

Need

The vegetation structure in this mixed-conifer project area has been affected by mountain pine beetle attacks in the lodgepole pine. Approximately 40 to 70 percent of lodgepole pine within the project area has shown evidence of mountain pine beetle activity. The affected trees have

exhibited mortality, and are falling to the ground creating a large fuel load. Windstorms and snow loads have exacerbated the dead and down component. Stands are trending towards multi-storied structure through the encroachment of grand fir and subalpine fir on larch and pine, resulting in lower crown heights, and an increase of canopy bulk density. These conditions put the project area at risk for high intensity, high severity wildfire. A wildfire of this type would most likely be a stand replacing event, which would remove the seral, overstory component and have negative effects on watershed condition, thus affecting fish and habitat in streams. Functional seral stands are important aspects of a healthy, resilient ecosystem within this area.

The Red River Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale (USDA Forest Service 2003) states that seral lodgepole pine and western larch have declined in the watershed, while more shade tolerant grand fir and subalpine fir have increased with harvest, advancing forest succession, and fire suppression (p. 4-75 to 4-76). In mid elevation valleys and slopes within the watershed, the EAWS identified a high need to restore long interval, mixed and lethal vegetation disturbance dynamics to reflect the size of fire disturbance, provide large patches of snags, maintain larger contiguous undisturbed patches, and sustain western larch on the landscape; and on mid elevation moist slopes and in canyons in the grand fir mosaic, to provide early seral habitat and to maintain existing larch and lodgepole pine on ridges (p. 5-13).

Additionally, the EAWS states that the high degree of departure in vegetation composition, structure, or disturbance process from presettlement regimes has implications for sustainability of wildlife species and habitats, plant communities, and risk to ecosystem stability and resiliency. In many areas, harvest or other mechanical vegetation treatment will not be available because of poor access or low economic values of the timber resource, and management-ignited prescribed fire should be used to accomplish vegetation and fuels management objectives (p. 5-18).

Proposed Action

The Red River Ranger District proposes to use mixed-severity prescribed fire to treat approximately 3000 acres. Expected mortality of mature forest canopy would be less than 10% across the project area. Understory mortality and rejuvenation of shrubs and herbaceous vegetation would occur on approximately 70% of the project area. Prescribed burn activities would most likely occur in late summer or early fall using aerial and hand ignition. Construction of hand fireline may occur at key areas to limit fire spread, but natural barriers, topographic changes, and existing trails would be used across the majority of the project area. No ignitions would occur within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs), however fire would be allowed to back into those areas, consistent with the Programmatic Biological Assessment for the Fire Management Program on the Nez Perce National Forest (USDA Forest Service 1999), which addresses PACFISH guidelines. The project would likely be implemented over two or more years in several units to allow for scheduling to best meet prescription objectives.

Environmental Issues

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to watersheds, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife habitat.

Decisions to Be Made

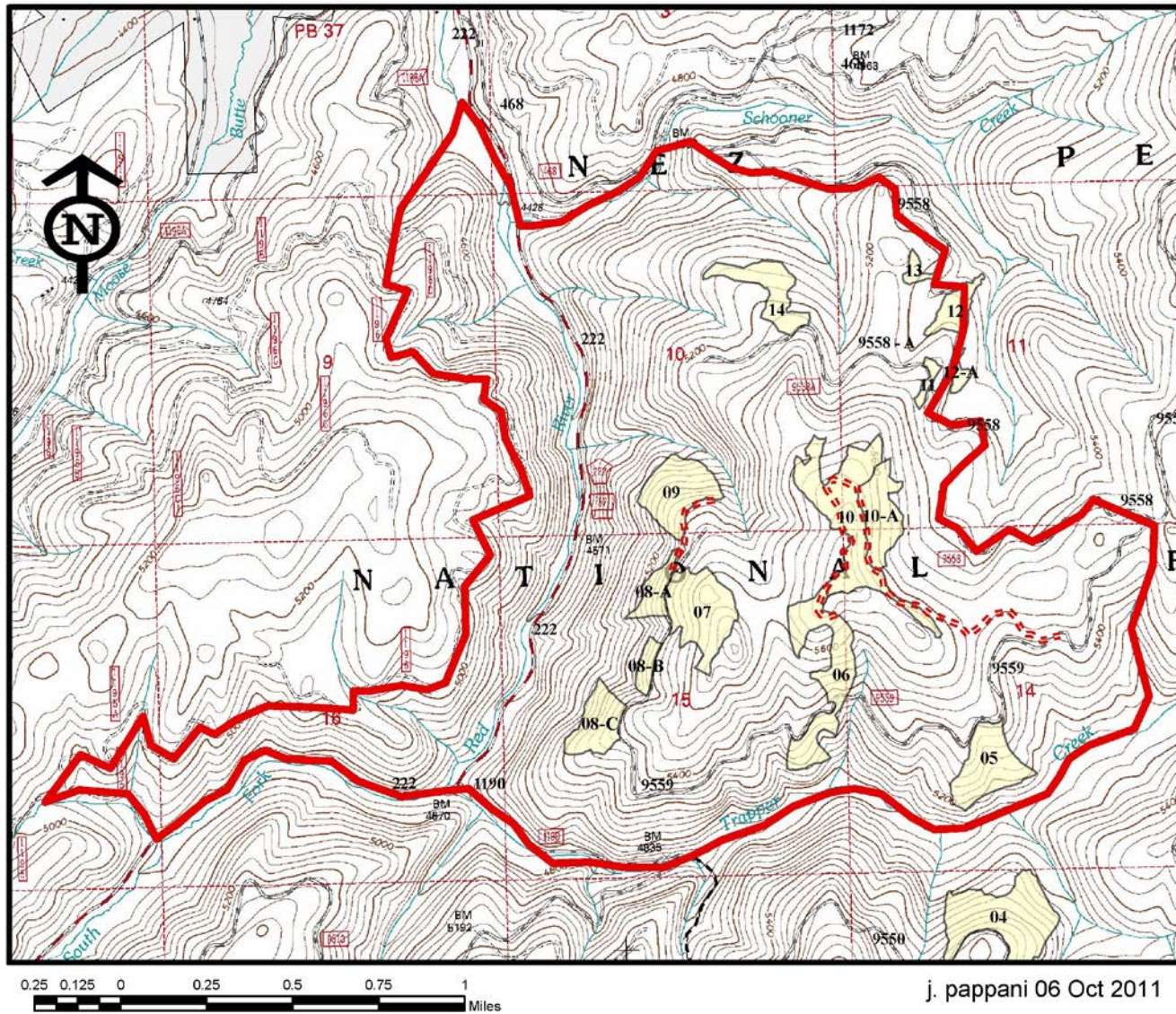
The Red River District Ranger is the deciding official for this proposal. The decisions to be made are:

- Whether or not to prescribe burn approximately 3000 acres.
- If the area is prescribed burned, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

Project Information

If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Justin Pappani at (208) 842-2124.

Trapper Face Prescribed Burn Project Map



Selway Winter Range Improvement

Introduction

The Moose Creek Ranger District proposes to cut deciduous shrubs using chainsaws or other hand operated tools on approximately 3000 acres in the project area on the Moose Creek Ranger District, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Idaho County, Idaho at T32N R8E Sections 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29 and 30; and T32 N R9E Sections 18, 19, and 30; (Boise Meridian) (see attached map).

The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.

Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to improve the quality of winter range habitat for deer and elk through management practices. Forest-wide management direction in the Nez Perce National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-1 to II-27 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area direction for Management Areas (MA) 15 and 16 may also apply to this project. These management areas provide direction to manage to produce sustained yields of sawtimber and other wood products, while improving the quality of the deer and elk winter habitat on the appropriate areas (MA 15) (p. III-44), and to improve the quality of the winter range habitat for deer and elk through timber harvesting, prescribed burning, and other management practices (MA 16) (p. III-46).

This project is located within the Nez Perce National Forest Plan FEIS Appendix C Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area, and these same acres are also identified as the Rackliff-Gedney Idaho Roadless Area, with a Backcountry Restoration Theme in the Idaho Roadless Rule (36 CFR 294 Subpart C). Vegetation management that maintains or restores the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure, and processes, such as the proposed activities, are allowed in the Backcountry/Restoration Theme of the Idaho Roadless Areas [36 CFR Part 294.24(c)(1)(iv)].

This project is located in the North Selway Face Ecological Response Unit (ERU) identified in the Selway and Middle Fork Clearwater Rivers Subbasin Assessment. Recommendations for the North Selway Face ERU specifically state to not maintain south slopes in shrub fields in perpetuity, but to restore frequent to infrequent mixed and lethal severity terrestrial disturbance regimes.

Need

The former Selway District had a large elk winter range improvement program in the 1980s and 1990s that involved the application of prescribed fire to stimulate shrub re-growth. Since the end of this prescribed fire program, the deciduous shrubs, valuable components of big game forage, have grown too tall and become decadent, and are therefore no longer available or palatable as forage. These shrubs are also overtopping conifers that have become established. Allowing a

conifer forest to develop on the shrub field sites could improve soil productivity and would support the natural disturbance regime of the area.

Proposed Action

The Moose Creek Ranger District proposes to cut deciduous shrubs using chainsaws or other hand operated tools on up to approximately 3000 acres. Deciduous shrubs greater than five inches diameter at breast height (DBH) would generally be girdled rather than felled. Conifers would not be cut. All slash would be lopped to less than two feet in height and big game and Forest Service trails cleared of slash to allow more rapid decomposition and easier movement of animals and people. No ground disturbing activities are proposed, as all cutting would be accomplished with handtools. No treatment would occur within RHCAs. The District would implement the project beginning in 2012 and accomplish small increments as funding becomes available.

Environmental Issues

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to watersheds, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife habitat.

Decisions to Be Made

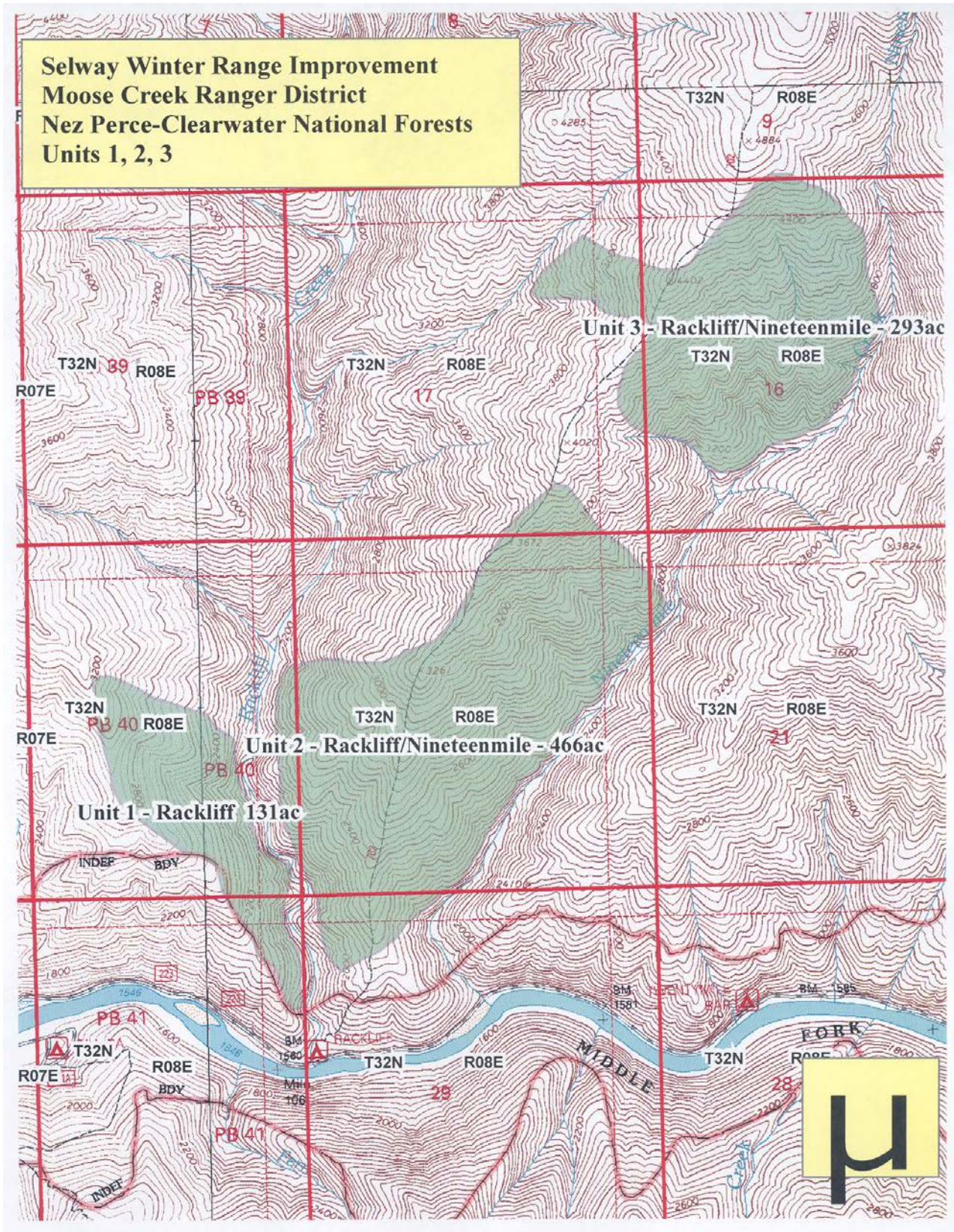
The Moose Creek District Ranger is the deciding official for this proposal. The decisions to be made are:

- Whether or not to cut deciduous shrubs using chainsaws or other hand operated tools on up to approximately 3000 acres.
- If the area is treated, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

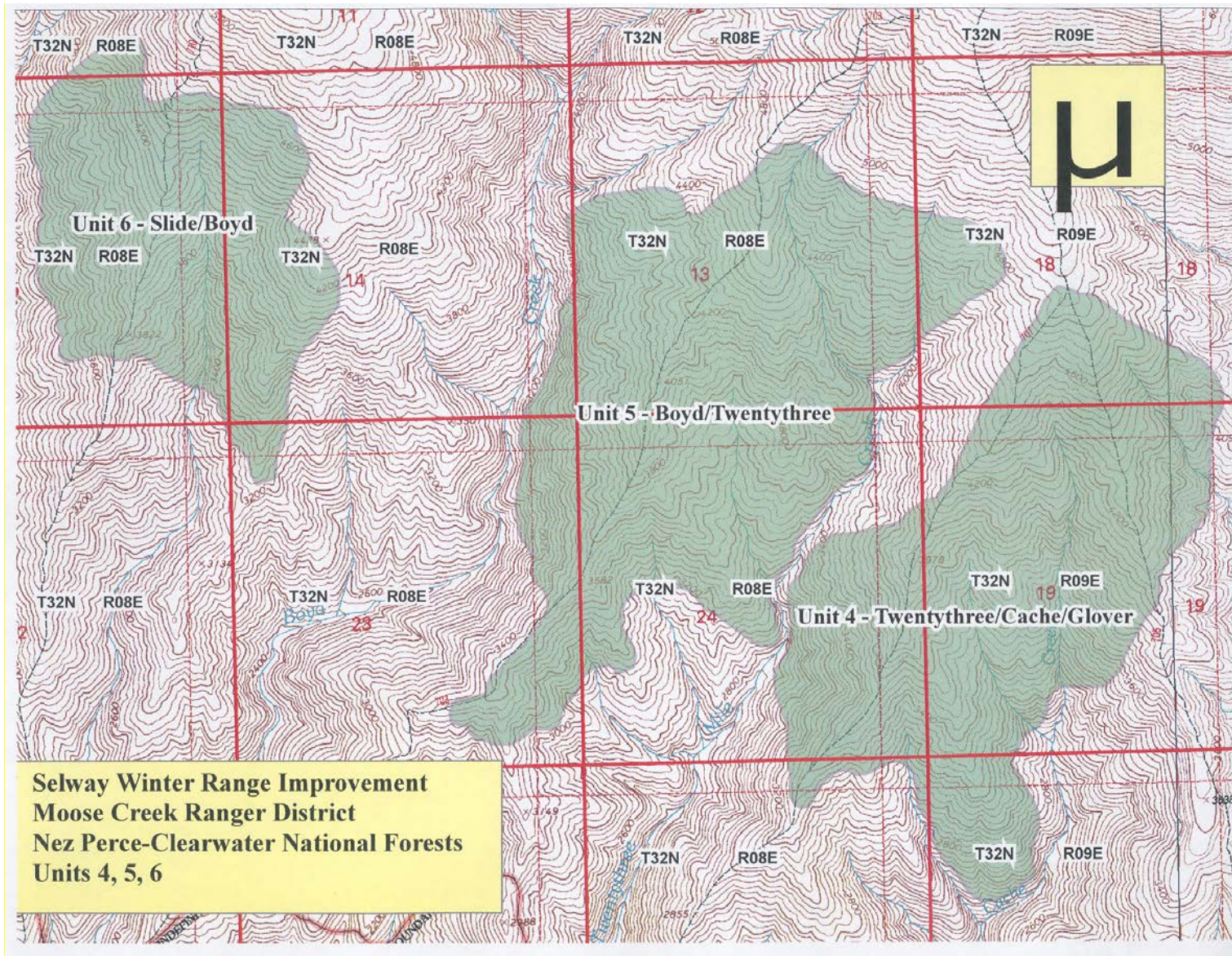
Project Information

If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Mike Ward at (208) 926-6413.

Selway Winter Range Improvement Project Map 1



Selway Winter Range Improvement Project Map 2



Granite Fire Salvage

Introduction

The Powell Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to harvest approximately 82 acres of dead and dying trees within the 350-acre Granite Pass Fire area, on the Powell Ranger District, Nez-Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Clearwater County, Idaho at T38N R14E Sections 1, 11 and 12 (Boise Meridian) (see attached map). The proposed project is located along Forest Road 595 approximately seven miles northwest of Lolo Pass (about one mile west of Granite Pass). All proposed harvest is located on the Idaho side of the State line.

The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13) Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction.

Purpose and Need

Purpose (Desired Condition)

The purpose of this project is to:

- ✓ Recover economic value of dead and fire damaged timber in a timely manner to provide social and economic benefits.
- ✓ Improve public safety and access, and decrease culvert blockages.
- ✓ Reduce long term excessive fuel loadings adjacent to a private cabin next to Area A.

Forest-wide management direction in the Clearwater National Forest Plan related to this project can be found on pages II-1 to II-40 (USDA Forest Service, 1987). The management area direction for Management Areas (MA) E1 and M2 may also apply to this project. These management areas provide direction to: provide optimum, sustained production of wood products (MA E1) (p. III-57), and to manage under the principles of multiple use as areas of special consideration, distinctive values, and integrated with adjacent management areas to the extent that water and other riparian dependent resources are protected (MA M2) (p. III-69).

Need (Existing Condition)

The project area consists of the 350-acre Granite Fire, which burned in August of 2011. The areas proposed for treatment consist of lodgepole pine and subalpine fir stands that received 90% or greater tree mortality. The stands were composed of primarily trees ranging from 4” to 14” diameter at breast height (DBH) with a few scattered larger trees (20” plus). Existing fuel loading adjacent to private structures in Area A are high. Dead trees located along Forest Road 595 have the potential to fall and block access, cause safety hazards, and block culverts.

Use of the dead and fire damaged timber in a timely manner is necessary to provide social and economic benefits before the timber loses its economic value. The harvest of the timber would contribute to the timber supply for local, regional and national needs.

Proposed Action

The Powell Ranger District of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests proposes to harvest approximately 82 acres of dead and dying trees within the 350-acre Granite Pass Fire area.

Three treatment areas are proposed: Area A approximately 18 acres, Area B approximately 4 acres, and Area C approximately 60 acres. Ground based systems including tractors, skidders, forwarders and feller/bunchers would be used to harvest the timber in the treatment areas. No roads would be built, and logs would be brought down skid trails to the main road. Fifteen to twenty tons per acre of standing and down large woody debris would be left across the treatment areas to provide long term nutrients, soil stability, and snag habitat. All trees greater than 20" DBH would be left when encountered; this equates to approximately 2 to 5 trees per acre, except for a 100 to 200 foot wide strip along Forest Road 595, in which all hazard trees would be removed for public safety. In addition, all mountain hemlock trees (estimated at up to 15 trees per acre) and subalpine fir trees less than 8" DBH would be left for standing and down course woody debris. Burned areas determined to have detrimental soil impacts from the fire would be avoided or deleted from the harvest units. No activities would occur within PACFISH default riparian areas, except for incidental removal of fire-damaged trees determined to present a safety risk to the public or trees at risk of falling and blocking a culvert. Portions of the fire area may also be planted to provide species diversity. The harvest area is accessed by Forest Road 595 from Lolo Pass; road maintenance including brushing and surface blading would be conducted to provide adequate truck hauling access. This fire salvage proposal is adjacent to the proposed Powell Divide sale, which is scheduled to sell in 2012.

Environmental Issues

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to watershed, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife habitat.

Decisions to Be Made

The Powell District Ranger is the deciding official for this proposal. The decisions to be made are:

- Whether or not to salvage trees on 82 acres.
- If the area is treated, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

Project Information

If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Tam White at (208) 476-8226.

Granite Fire Salvage Project Map

