

Heritage Resources

Introduction

Heritage Resources involve the conservation of archeological, cultural, architectural, and historic sites and artifacts. This section describes the existing heritage resource conditions of the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Proposal and how the no action and action alternatives would affect the various components of this resource. The effects analysis focuses on those areas where potentially ground-disturbing activities such as timber salvage harvesting are proposed. Activities that only involve the use of hand crews and no heavy equipment, such as prescribed burning, would typically receive less consideration from heritage resource personnel.

Analysis Area

Spatial Bounds

The analysis area used to discuss the effects on Heritage Resources is the project area. The effects on Heritage Resources would not extend beyond the project boundary.

Data Sources, Methods, and Assumptions Used

The Flathead National Forest is taking a multi-phase approach to Heritage Resource compliance [36 CFR 800.3(c)] for the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Analysis. This is possible because of the site-specific nature of Heritage Resources and Heritage Resource compliance. The first phase (1) is a reconnaissance level inventory of known Heritage Resources and a sampling of areas with a high probability for the occurrence of additional Heritage Resources. A pre-survey files search for information on previously recorded heritage sites in the proposed project area is also conducted. This phase includes initial consultation with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to identify any concerns they may have regarding traditional cultural properties, traditional use plants, and areas of spiritual importance in the project area. The second phase (2) occurs prior to actual project implementation and requires a thorough inventory of all proposed undertakings so as to locate, record, and evaluate the historical significance of any identified Heritage Resources.

Affected Environment

Historic Condition

Human occupation of the greater Swan Valley in general, and within boundaries of the proposed Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project specifically, has probably spanned the past 10,000 years. Evidence of those prehistoric hunters and gatherers however, forest wide, is rare. Typical Heritage Resource Sites or artifacts that one might encounter during pedestrian inventories would include tepee rings, scarred trees, pictographs or petroglyphs, lithic (stone) scatters of flint/chert debitage from the production of stone tools, isolated arrowheads or lance points, travois trails, hearths or roasting pits, bone tools, stone scrapers, awls, bifaces, knives, and cores.

Historic era Euro-American settlement of the Flathead Valley in general and the Swan Valley in particular came more than 50 years after fur trader/trapper David Thompson's early ventures into northwest Montana circa 1800. Evidence of early white settlers that might be discovered during Heritage Resource

Surveys include trappers lean-tos, metal traps, log cabins, rifles or other firearms, and various metal tools including plows to saws.

Existing Condition

Pre-Survey Files Search: Prior to the two-phase inventory, the Forest's Heritage Resources Staff conducted an in-house files search for information on known, previously recorded heritage sites in the Mid Swan Project Area. General Land Office Plat Maps, HES plats, BLM Land Status Records, historic forest maps, local history texts, the forest's Historic overview, studies on Native American use of western Montana, and the forest's cumulative site atlas and survey atlas were all referenced.

The results of a pre-survey files search for information on known Heritage Resources in the proposed Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project identified one recorded heritage property, 24LA39, in the analysis area and four previous inventories going back to 1991. Previous heritage surveys covered approximately half of acreage in the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project.

24LA39: Lion Creek Site: "The Lion Creek Site is situated on a lodgepole flat on the south bank of Lion Creek and covers approximately two acres of the flat. The site contains a number of scarred and blazed lodgepole pines and at least 17 'tipi rings' which are indicated by stone circles from 12' to 15' in diameter, marked vegetation changes, or both. There are several locations where numbers of old weathered tipi lodge poles lean against trees or rocks. Portions of trails are still visible, and at least one of these is marked by blazes. An indication of an old road track, which passes over several of the rings, also was noted. At the west end of this track, near where a turn around can be seen, there are several badly deteriorated tins and small pails. A few scattered tins also occur to the south of the site. Shell casings marked 'REM-UMC 32-40' have been hammered into the face of a scar on one of the trees; the regrowth of the bark over the scar has nearly covered several of the shells, evidence that they have been there for some time. Ammunition of this caliber and marked 'REM-UMC' was manufactured after 1902 when Remington and UMC merged. Manufacture of the cartridge ceased in the 1920's, however, the ammunition is still available." (Stump, 1977).

An effort was made to relocate the Lion Creek Site and two of the 35 recorded features were found. Feature T was recorded as a large rock with associated tipi poles. Flathead National Forest Heritage Staff were able to locate the rock, but it appears that the tipi poles have rotted away. Feature U, a square excavated hole, is still present and appears little changed. Using these two features in conjunction with a scale map of the site created in 1977, a search was conducted to locate the remaining features, including the 17 tipi rings. Nothing was found. The blazed or scarred trees were either blown down in the wind event of July 4, 2008, or died and fell sometime between 1977 and 2008. No tipi rings were visible.

Pedestrian Survey: The second phase of the two-part strategy requires the staff conduct a pedestrian-based, stratified sample survey (inventory) of the proposed Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project. The survey strategy was taken from the Forest's Site Identification Strategy (SIS), which is part of the Region One Programmatic Agreement (R1PA) with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (MTSHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding compliance to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The survey methodology is tied to topography and basic professional judgments about historic land use and cultural adaptation throughout history.

Simply stated, the methodology requires an 80 percent reconnaissance in topographic areas of less than 20 percent slope (such as level stream terraces) or in areas considered to exhibit a "high probability" for evidence of past cultural manifestations (i.e., ridge tops, rock outcrops, stream confluences). Survey transects would be spaced every 20 meters apart. Topographic areas in excess of 20 percent slope, but less than 50 percent, and that feature a "moderate" level of probability for containing cultural sites, were surveyed at 40 percent coverage, or with survey transects spaced every 40 meters. "Low" level

probability areas (slopes in excess of 50 percent) received 10 percent coverage with survey transects spaced every 70 meters apart.

The results of the stratified sample survey methodology were negative: no historic or prehistoric Heritage Resource Sites were discovered during the course of the pedestrian reconnaissance.

Discussions with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) did not identify any concerns in the project area. Consultation with the CSKT will continue.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative A - No Action Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects

Implementation of Alternative A would neither directly nor indirectly affect Heritage Resources because there would be no change to the integrity of Heritage Resources since no activities would be implemented. An exception to this is the threat of wildland fire. Failure to salvage down trees as proposed in the action alternatives could increase the potential for wildland fire, increasing the potential for adverse effects by fire to Heritage Resources through and beyond the project area. Wildland fire also increases the risk of site looting and vandalism due to the exposure through lack of vegetative cover.

Alternatives B, C, and D Direct and Indirect Effects

The Flathead National Forest participates in the R1PA with MTSHPO and the Advisory Council that provides for a more efficient process for conducting cultural resource inventories and meeting Section 106 compliance. Under the R1PA, if there are no eligible properties affected by the undertaking either through project redesign or because there are no properties located within the undertaking, then the undertaking is included in an annual report to MTSHPO and compliance is completed without project consultation. On the other hand, if an eligible property is affected by the proposed undertaking, then compliance is completed in the standard way with consultation with MTSHPO.

Implementation of the action alternatives proposed for the Mid Swan Project could directly affect a potentially eligible cultural resource. Formal consultation with MTSHPO is in progress. Consultation focuses on the eligibility of Site 24LA39. Flathead National Forest Heritage Staff believe that the site lacks integrity and is, therefore, not eligible for the NRHP.

It is recognized that even the most intensive field surveys may not locate all cultural sites. The portions of this project that would be implemented through a timber sale contract under any action alternative would include the "B6.24# Protecting of Cultural Resources" clause which enables the Forest Service to modify or cancel a timber sale contract to protect Heritage Resources, regardless of when they are identified.

Alternatives B, C, and D Cumulative Effects

There would be no cumulative effects to identified Heritage Resources in the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project from any past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities as presented at the beginning of this chapter. However, any such effects would be identified as part of the consultation process with MTSHPO and the CSKT and appropriate avoidance or moderating measures would be developed.

Regulatory Framework and Consistency

The Forest Service has obligations under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) of 1978 to "protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian" [Public Law 95-442]. The tribes also have rights under the Hellgate Treaty of 1855, including hunting, gathering, and grazing rights.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana have been identified as a tribal group concerned about the management of Heritage Resources on the Flathead National Forest. The tribes were contacted in the initial planning stages of the Mid Swan Blowdown Salvage Project in order to establish lines of communication between the two parties, to advise them on the scope of the undertaking including potential effects, and to make their resource concerns (if any) an official part of the project file. Consultation with recognized tribal governments is further defined and required by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 [Public Law 101-106], the 1992 amendments to the NHPA, and the 1999 revisions to the implementing regulations in 36 CFR Part 800; Protection of Historic Properties.