



File Code: 1950

Date: March 24, 2005

Commenting Organization

The Leadore Ranger District has decided to approve and implement the Smith Bates Ridge Timber Sale Project. Enclosed is a copy of the signed Decision Memo that documents the reasons, design features, and mitigation measures that allow the project to be implemented.

The purpose for the project is to provide commercial timber products to local communities. The project is needed to allow for the continuation of uneven-aged management of a Douglas-fir timber stand. The project is also needed to implement the thinning of overly-dense pockets of trees within the stand, which will result in improving the health of the remaining trees and in reducing the risk of a stand-replacing from being able to move through the stand.

The Smith Bates Ridge Timber Sale is to be located on the ridge that is between Jack Smith Gulch and Bates Gulch. The legal description of the proposed project site is T.16N. R24E. Sec15 NESW1/4 and SENW1/4; Boise Meridian, Lemhi County, Idaho. This harvest site was selected because: 1) it is in an area that is environmentally suitable for timber harvest, 2) it is not in a roadless area, 3) it is not in designated old growth habitat, 4) it is not in an area that is suitable American lynx habitat, 5) it is not on steep slopes, 6) it is not in a riparian area, 7) it has existing access, and 8) it is considered to be economically viable.

The proposed action has been categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits the criteria of category 31.2-12, described in Forest Service Handbook Interim Direction (ID) 1909.15-2004-3, July 6, 2004. This category is for "the limited timber harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres, and requiring no more than 1/2 mile of temporary road construction". Salmon-Challis National Forest Resource Specialists have not identified any adverse environmental effects, or potential adverse effects, to sensitive environmental situations (extraordinary circumstances) in the project Action Area. Since the proposed action has been categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS, a Decision Memo has been prepared that will not be subject to administrative appeal review (CFR 215.12(f)). Timber harvest could begin in the spring or summer of 2005.

For further information, contact Michael Steck, Project ID Team Leader, Leadore Ranger District, Leadore, ID 83464, (208) 768-2515, msteck@fs.fed.us, or Dennis M. Hilliard, District Ranger, Leadore Ranger District, PO Box 180, Leadore, ID 83464, (208) 768-2500, dhilliard@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Dennis Hilliard*
DENNIS M. HILLIARD
Leadore District Ranger



