

Contents

CHAPTER 1 — PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.1	Introduction	1-1
1.2	Proposed Action	1-1
1.3	Background Information	1-2
1.3.1	Diamond Project’s Relationship to Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Pilot Project.....	1-2
1.3.2	Project Location	1-2
1.4	Purpose and Need	1-4
1.4.1	Introduction	1-4
1.4.2	Project Objectives and Need for Action	1-4
1.5	Laws, Regulations, EISs, and Other Direction that Influence the Scope of this EIS.....	1-10
1.5.1	Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act	1-10
1.5.2	Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act EIS, Supplemental EIS, and Records of Decision.....	1-10
1.5.3	Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Supplemental EIS.....	1-10
1.5.4	Forest Plan Direction.....	1-11
1.5.5	Diamond Landscape Assessment	1-11
1.6	Decision Framework	1-12
1.7	Project Schedule	1-12
1.8	Public Involvement.....	1-12
1.8.1	Scoping Process.....	1-12
1.8.2	Scoping Issues	1-12
1.9	Permits, Licenses, and other Consultation Requirements.....	1-15

CHAPTER 2 — ALTERNATIVES

2.1	Introduction	2-1
2.2	Description of the Alternatives Considered in Detail.....	2-1
2.2.1	Alternative A: No Action	2-3
2.2.2	Alternative B: Proposed Action.....	2-4
2.2.3	Alternative C	2-12
2.2.4	Alternative D: The Preferred Alternative	2-13
2.2.5	Alternative F.....	2-19
2.2.6	Design Criteria Common to All Action Alternatives	2-23
2.3	Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study	2-33
2.3.1	Alternative E: Modification of the Proposed Action to Maintain Habitat for Sensitive Wildlife Species.....	2-33

2.3.2	Alternative G. Modification of the Proposed Action to Treat Canada Thistle Locations with Nonherbicide Treatments.....	2-33
2.3.3	Alternative H: Modification or Elimination of the Use of Borax	2-35
2.3.4	Alternative I: Maintain 50 Percent Canopy Closure and 20-inch Upper Diameter Limit.....	2-38
2.4	Summary of Effects of All Alternatives	2-39
2.4.1	Alternative A (No Action)	2-39
2.4.2	Alternative B (Proposed Action)	2-43
2.4.3	Alternative C	2-44
2.4.4	Alternative D	2-44
2.4.5	Alternative F	2-45
2.5	Comparison of Alternatives.....	2-46

CHAPTER 3 — AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

3.1	Forest Vegetation and Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality	3-1
3.1.1	Forest Structure, Species Composition, and Fuels and Fire	3-1
3.1.2	Forest Health	3-5
3.1.3	Air Quality.....	3-6
3.2	Soils and Hydrology	3-9
3.2.1	Affected Environment: Soils	3-9
3.2.2	Affected Environment: Watershed	3-12
3.3	Wildlife – Aquatic and Terrestrial	3-21
3.3.1	Introduction	3-21
3.3.2	Affected Environment: Aquatic Wildlife Species	3-21
3.3.3	Affected Environment: Terrestrial Wildlife Species	3-28
3.3.4	Affected Environmental: Neotropical Migratory Birds	3-44
3.3.5	Snags/Logs	3-45
3.4	Economics	3-47
3.4.1	Payments in Lieu of Taxes	3-47
3.4.2	Timber Yield Taxes	3-48
3.4.3	Receipt Act	3-48
3.4.4	Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.....	3-48
3.5	Botanical Resources and Noxious Weeds	3-50
3.5.1	General Existing Environment	3-50
3.5.2	Noxious Weeds.....	3-57
3.6	Transportation System.....	3-61
3.7	Heritage Resources	3-62
3.7.1	History of the Project Area	3-62
3.8	Recreation and Mining	3-72
3.8.1	Recreation.....	3-72

3.8.2	Mining	3-73
3.9	Scenic Resources.....	3-74
3.9.1	Existing Landscape.....	3-74
3.9.2	Visual Quality Objectives.....	3-74
3.9.3	Existing Scenic Integrity	3-75
3.9.4	Desired Landscape Character	3-75
3.10	Range Resources	3-76
3.10.1	Annual Operating Instructions.....	3-78
3.10.2	Key Areas.....	3-79

CHAPTER 4 — ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1	Forest Vegetation and Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality.....	4-1
4.1.1	Summary of Effects.....	4-1
4.1.2	Guiding Regulations.....	4-2
4.1.3	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Forest Structure, Species Composition, Fuels and Fire, Forest Health, and Air Quality	4-2
4.1.4	Environmental Consequences: Forest Vegetation and Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality.....	4-9
4.2	Soils and Hydrology	4-49
4.2.1	Summary of Effects.....	4-49
4.2.2	Guiding Regulations.....	4-51
4.2.3	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Soils and Watershed.....	4-52
4.2.4	Environmental Consequences: Watershed and Soil Resources	4-57
4.3	Wildlife – Aquatic and Terrestrial.....	4-81
4.3.1	Summary of Effects.....	4-81
4.3.2	Regulatory Framework	4-85
4.3.3	Methodology for Assessing Impacts	4-86
4.3.4	Environmental Consequences: General Effects on Mountain Yellow-Legged Frogs and Their Habitat.....	4-90
4.3.5	Environmental Consequences of Each Action Alternative.....	4-99
4.3.6	Herbicide Hazard Analysis.....	4-103
4.3.7	Environmental Consequences: Aquatic Management Indicator Species.....	4-107
4.3.8	Environmental Consequences: Terrestrial Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species	4-114
4.3.9	Environmental Consequences: Sensitive Species.....	4-119
4.3.10	Environmental Consequences: Terrestrial Management Indicator Species.....	4-150
4.3.11	Environmental Consequences: Neotropical Migratory Birds	4-156
4.4	Economics	4-161
4.4.1	Introduction	4-161
4.4.2	Regulatory Framework	4-161
4.4.3	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Economics	4-161
4.4.4	Economic Consequences	4-162
4.4.5	Summary of Cumulative Effects	4-165

4.5	Botanical Resources and Noxious Weeds	4-166
4.5.1	Introduction	4-166
4.5.2	Summary of Effects	4-166
4.5.3	Regulatory Framework	4-168
4.5.4	Methodology for Assessing Impacts.....	4-169
4.5.5	Environmental Consequences: General Effects on Rare Plant Species	4-172
4.5.6	Environmental Consequences: Effects on Specific Rare Plant Species.....	4-177
4.5.7	Environmental Consequences: Effects on Noxious Weeds	4-188
4.6	Transportation System.....	4-197
4.6.1	Regulatory Framework	4-197
4.6.2	Methodology for Assessing Impacts.....	4-197
4.6.3	Environmental Consequences.....	4-198
4.6.4	Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions.....	4-202
4.7	Heritage Resources	4-203
4.7.1	Introduction	4-203
4.7.2	Guiding Regulations	4-203
4.7.3	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Heritage Resources.....	4-204
4.7.4	Environmental Consequences.....	4-205
4.7.5	NHPA Section 106 Assessment.....	4-205
4.7.6	Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions.....	4-206
4.7.7	Summary of Cumulative Effects	4-207
4.8	Recreation and Mining	4-208
4.8.1	Regulatory Framework	4-208
4.8.2	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Recreation and Mining	4-208
4.8.3	Environmental Consequences.....	4-209
4.9	Scenic Resources	4-212
4.9.1	Regulatory Framework	4-212
4.9.2	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Scenic Resources.....	4-212
4.9.3	Environmental Consequences.....	4-213
4.10	Range Resources	4-215
4.10.1	Regulatory Framework	4-215
4.10.2	Methodology for Assessing Impacts on Range Resources	4-215
4.10.3	Environmental Consequences.....	4-216
4.11	Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity.....	4-220
4.12	Unavoidable Adverse Effects	4-221
4.13	Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources	4-222
4.14	Legal and Regulatory Compliance	4-223
4.14.1	Principle Environmental Laws	4-223

CHAPTER 5 — CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

5.1	Preparers and Contributors	5-1
5.1.1	Interdisciplinary Team Members.....	5-1
5.1.2	Federal, State, and Local Agencies	5-3
5.1.3	Tribes.....	5-3
5.2	Distribution of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.....	5-3
5.2.1	Federally Recognized Tribes	5-3
5.2.2	Federal, State, and Local Agencies	5-4
5.2.3	Organizations and Businesses	5-4
5.2.4	Individuals	5-5
	Acronyms	5-7
	Glossary.....	5-9
	References	5-19
	Index.....	5-37

Appendices

Appendix A:	Detailed List of Treatments Proposed for Each DFPZ Unit and Area Thinning Unit	A-1
Appendix B:	Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Projects.....	B-1
Appendix C:	Standard Management Requirements and Monitoring Strategy	C-1
Appendix D:	Diamond Project Economic Analysis	D-1
Appendix E:	Human Health Risk Assessment	E-1
Appendix F:	Diamond Project Road Survey	F-1

Figures

1-1.	Diamond Project vicinity map.....	1-3
3-1.	Soils Analysis Area.....	3-9
3-2.	Watershed Analysis Area	3-13
3-3.	Headcuts and barriers to fish passage	3-17
3-4	Spotted Owl PACs, SOHAs, and HRCAs in the Diamond Project Wildlife Analysis Area	3-34
3-5.	Botany Analysis Area—the geographic area used to analyze the effects of the proposed project on botanical resources	3-51
3-6.	Number of rare plant occurrences with potential to be affected by the proposed project activities compared to the total number of occurrences known in California	3-54

3-7 Range allotments in the Diamond Project Area	3-77
4-1. General effects of increasing stand density on (a) insect and disease impacts, and (b) fire hazard as described by Powell (1994, 1999).....	4-10
4-2. Existing condition species composition	4-12
4-3. Trees per acre pre and post fuel treatments by diameter class for CWHR size classes 4 and 5	4-17
4-4. Species composition post fuel treatment for CWHR size classes 4 and 5.....	4-21
4-5. Relative stand density over time	4-22
4-6. Trees per acre pre and post Baker cypress fuel treatments and corresponding species composition post treatment	4-25
4-7. Trees per acre pre and post area thinning treatment by diameter class for CWHR size classes 4 and 5	4-28
4-8. Species composition post area thinning treatments for CWHR size classes 4 and 5	4-31
4-9. Conceptual disturbance and recovery model for a harvest activity	4-53
4-10. Predicted change in the number of acres occupied by Canada thistle in the Botany Analysis Area over time as a result of the proposed alternatives.....	4-189

Tables

2-1. Summary of treatments proposed in DFPZ Units, by action alternative	2-2
2-2. Summary of treatments proposed in Area Thinning Units, by action alternative	2-3
2-3. Alternative B – proposed treatments in the DFPZ Units.....	2-5
2-4. Alternative B – proposed group selection, by logging system, in the Area Thinning Units	2-7
2-5. Alternative B – proposed treatments in the Area Thinning Units	2-9
2-6. Alternative B – proposed noxious weed treatments	2-10
2-7. Alternative B – summary of proposed road treatments	2-12
2-8. Alternative C – proposed noxious weed treatments	2-12
2-9. Alternative D – proposed treatments in the DFPZ Units.....	2-15
2-10. Alternative D – proposed group selection, by tractor logging system, in Area Thinning Units.....	2-16
2-11. Alternative D – proposed treatments in the Area Thinning Units	2-17
2-12. Alternative D – summary of proposed road treatments.....	2-18
2-13. Alternative F – proposed treatments in the DFPZ Units	2-20
2-14. Alternative F – proposed group selection, by tractor logging system, in the Area Thinning Units	2-21
2-15. Alternative F – proposed treatments in Area Thinning Units.....	2-22

2-16. Alternative F – summary of proposed road treatments	2-23
2-17. Design Criteria for DFPZs	2-24
2-18. Design Criteria for group selection	2-25
2-19. Design Criteria for area thinning.....	2-26
2-20. Design Criteria for aspen stands	2-27
2-21. Design Criteria for Baker cypress stands	2-28
2-22. Design Criteria for RHCA improvements.....	2-29
2-23. Equipment restriction zones in RHCAs	2-30
2-24. Pile burning restriction zones in RHCAs	2-30
2-25. Design Criteria for herbicide use	2-31
2-26. Chemicals, application rates, and application volumes proposed for Canada thistle control within the Diamond Project Area.....	2-32
2-27. Design Criteria for transportation improvements.....	2-32
2-28. Summary of project objectives and issues identified in scoping.....	2-39
2-29. Comparison of all alternatives in terms of meeting the purpose and need	2-40
2-30. Summary of how the alternatives address the issues identified during scoping.....	2-42
2-31. Summary comparison of alternatives by using the indicator measures.....	2-48
3-1. Existing CWHR size class and density distribution in the Diamond Project Area	3-4
3-2. Acreage and description of Fire Regime Condition Classes 1, 2, and 3	3-5
3-3. Towns, communities, National Parks, and highways within 20 miles of the Diamond Project boundary	3-6
3-4. Attainment designations for Plumas County.....	3-7
3-5. Forest Survey Site Class and maximum Erosion Hazard Rating for the Fuel Treatment Units and Area Thinning Units.....	3-10
3-6. Soil productivity results from field surveys	3-11
3-7. Miles of stream type and stream density in the Watershed Analysis Area	3-15
3-8. Summary of stream condition inventory data for the Diamond Project Area	3-15
3-9. Riparian vegetation characteristics along surveyed streams	3-16
3-10. Subwatershed disturbance in Equivalent Roaded Acres	3-19
3-11. Forest Service Sensitive aquatic wildlife species that potentially occur on the Plumas National Forest	3-24

3-12. Subwatersheds with Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive aquatic wildlife species and miles of streams.....	3-26
3-13. Estimates of rainbow trout standing stock and biomass in five tributaries to Indian Creek.....	3-27
3-14. Federally listed Threatened and Endangered terrestrial wildlife species that potentially occur on the National Forest	3-28
3-15. Forest Service Sensitive terrestrial wildlife species that potentially occur on the Plumas National Forest.....	3-30
3-16. Potential acres of suitable owl habitat in the Wildlife Analysis Area based on 130,653 National Forest acres.....	3-33
3-17. Acres of high and moderate capability goshawk nesting habitat in Wildlife Analysis Area.....	3-36
3-18. Suitable Pacific fisher habitat in the Wildlife Analysis Area.....	3-38
3-19. Suitable marten habitat available in the Wildlife Analysis Area.....	3-39
3-20. Plumas National Forest Management Indicator Species that are not federally listed Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive species	3-40
3-21. Deer range within the Wildlife Analysis Area by deer herd	3-40
3-22. Percentage of Plumas National Forest lands by county	3-47
3-23. <i>Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act</i> full payment amounts to counties for fiscal 2005	3-49
3-24. Plumas National Forest Threatened, Candidate, Sensitive, and Management Indicator plant species	3-52
3-25. Noxious weed species in the Botany Analysis Area	3-57
3-26. Cultural phases of the Tahoe Reach chronology	3-63
3-27. The 2005 AOI use standards for range allotments on the Plumas National Forest	3-78
3-28. Scientific Analysis Team guidelines for range allotments	3-78
4-1. Diameter classes used for analysis	4-4
4-2. Sustained line production rates for common fuel models in the Diamond Project Area. Fuel Model 9 represents the desired condition.....	4-6
4-3. Relationship between flame length and potential for success of active suppression.....	4-6
4-4. Parameters used for stand-level modeling under 90th percentile weather conditions.....	4-7
4-5. Existing and projected stand structure for alternative A	4-10
4-6. Predicted flame length, fire type, height to live crown base, and mortality under alternative A.....	4-11
4-7. Predicted flame length, fire type, height to crown base, and mortality for the fuel treatments under alternatives B, C, D, and F	4-18
4-8. Effects of fuel treatments on stand structure under the action alternatives	4-20
4-9. Effects of Baker cypress fuel treatments on stand structure under the action alternatives	4-26

4-10. Effects of area thinning treatments on measurement indicators for stand structure	4-29
4-11. Effects of group selection on attributes of stand structure	4-35
4-12. Projected amounts of Borax application for each treatment and prescription	4-37
4-13. Predicted emissions for all burned acres in the Diamond Project Area	4-39
4-14. Alternative A acres of potential surface fire and crown fire (passive and active) for all public lands, private lands, PACS, and HRCAs in the Diamond Project Area.....	4-43
4-15. Alternatives B and C – acres of surface fire and crown fire (passive and active) for all public lands, private lands, PACs, and HRCAs in the Diamond Project Area.....	4-46
4-16. Cumulative effects on the landscape structure from all alternatives	4-47
4-17. Summary of environmental indicators and measures examined in this assessment.....	4-54
4-18. Equipment restriction zones and burn pile restriction zones in RHCAs	4-57
4-19. Predicted subwatershed disturbance in ERA for each alternative	4-60
4-20. Cumulative effects on skid trail and landing cover in Fuel Treatment Units.....	4-62
4-21. Cumulative effects on skid trail and landing cover in Area Thinning Units	4-63
4-22. Alternative D: Watershed mitigation measures – channel treatments.....	4-77
4-23. Approximate change in CWHR size classes 4M, 4D, 5M, and 5D habitat types in the Wildlife Analysis Area.....	4-84
4-24. The 12 subwatersheds in the Watershed Analysis Area with known MYLF populations	4-92
4-25. Expected herbicide exposure rates to surrogate fish species from typical application rates and central /typical water contamination rates.....	4-111
4-26. Expected herbicide exposure rates to surrogate aquatic invertebrate species from typical application rates and central /typical water contamination rates.....	4-112
4-27. Summary of existing conditions in spotted owl 500-acre nest cores that could be affected by the action alternatives.....	4-125
4-28. Summary of treatment effects, by alternative, on spotted owl 500-acre nest cores	4-126
4-29. Summary of treatment effects on the California spotted owl home range in the Wildlife Analysis Area.....	4-128
4-30. Cumulative reductions in spotted owl nesting habitat (CWHR size classes 5M, 5D, and 6) on the Mt. Hough Ranger District under HFQLG Pilot Project implementation	4-134
4-31. Cumulative reductions in northern goshawk nesting habitat on the Mt. Hough Ranger District	4-143
4-32. Pacific fisher habitat blocks (contiguous fisher habitat and CWHR size classes 4M, 4D, 5M, and 5D), by alternative	4-148
4-33. Comparison of economic impacts by alternative	4-163
4-34. Estimated distances between rare plant species and proposed herbicide treatments	4-174
4-35. Analysis of a scenario involving 100 percent absorption of glyphosate and clopyralid by a honey bee	4-175

4-36. Total pesticide use reported in the Botany Analysis Area between 2001 and 2004.....	4-178
4-37. Summary of potential effects on noxious weeds.....	4-188
4-38. Diamond Project classified and unclassified road decommissioning opportunities	4-199
4-39. Diamond Project proposed new road construction under alternatives B and C	4-200
4-40. Diamond Project proposed new road construction under alternatives D and F.....	4-200
4-41. Diamond Project proposed road reconstruction under alternatives B and C	4-200
4-42. Diamond Project proposed road reconstruction under alternative D.....	4-201
4-43. Diamond Project proposed road reconstruction under alternative F	4-201
4-44. Scenario involving long-term exposure of a large mammal to 100 percent contaminated vegetation.....	4-218