

Salt Timber Harvest and Fuels Hazard Reduction Project

Heritage Report

Prepared by:

Robert H. Nykamp
Archaeologist
TEAMS Enterprise Unit

for:

Shasta-Trinity National Forest

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Introduction

A heritage resource analysis was conducted for the Salt Timber Harvest and Fuels Reduction Project. The analysis was undertaken to determine if cultural or heritage properties were present in the Area of Potential (APE) effect, and if such properties would be affected by project actions. A set of criteria were assembled to off-set potential adverse effects and to promote potential beneficial effects to heritage resources by either removing potentially hazardous fuels or through resource avoidance.

Regulatory Framework

This analysis is in conformance with regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-665, 80 Stat.915); the National Environmental Protection Act (1969), Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (1990: P.L. 101-601), and American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978: P.L. 95-341).

Heritage Resource design features for the Salt Project follow the “Programmatic Agreement” and “Interim Protocols”, formally known as the First Amended Regional Programmatic Agreement Among The U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region California State Historic Preservation Officer, And Advisory Council On Historic Preservation Regarding The Process For Compliance With Section 106 Of The National Historic Preservation Act For Undertakings On The National Forests Of The Pacific Southwest Region (Regional PA), and the 2004 Interim Protocol for Non-Intensive Inventory Strategies for Hazardous Fuels and Vegetation Reduction Projects (Interim Protocol). Further direction can be found in the Land and Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (1995) of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Chapter 3, Section 10.

NHPA and its implementing regulations require Federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on Historic Properties. The term Historic Properties refers to Class I cultural properties that have been listed or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties, 36 CFR 800, outlines the set of procedures established by the NHPA that Federal Agencies follow before implementing an action that may affect Historic Properties. For the purpose of this analysis, any properties currently identified as potentially eligible or unevaluated will be considered Class II properties and are the same as eligible properties (Historic Properties). Class III properties are those sites that have been evaluated and found not eligible for listing with the NRHP. Such sites generally do not require further protection or mitigation.

Forest Service policy (FSM 2361.3) requires that projects with the potential to affect cultural resources be surveyed for cultural resources in order to comply with the above cited laws and regulations.

There are no federally recognized tribes in the South Fork Management area requiring direct consultation as provided by 36 CFR 800. However, in this area there is one non-recognized Native American group the Nor-Rel-Muk Wintu. They were contacted as part of normal section 106 consultations for this project as an interested party.

No comment has been received from the interested parties concerning any potential adverse effects to recorded archaeological sites. No response has also been received expressing concern how this project may effect areas of spiritual or traditional use.

Methodology for Analysis

Agency and State files were reviewed which included previous heritage inventory reports, site forms, maps, and other data sets. Tribal governments and public scoping was also conducted. These reviews confirm that Class I-III historic properties, and traditional use areas, exist within the project area. In accordance with the Regulatory Framework cited previously, a heritage resource study of the proposed project was conducted (Salt Timber Sale, Arnold, 2007).

Affected Environment

Existing Condition

Four known archaeological sites are recorded within the area of potential effect (project area). None of these sites are eligible for the National Historic Register.

Desired Condition

It is recognized that heritage surveys contribute to our knowledge of past lifeways. It is desired to protect historical sites. The above referenced heritage resource laws and regulations are designed to protect sites that are important to our understanding of past lifeways. The resource laws and regulations also provide for inventory and protection.

Environmental Consequences

Mitigation and Monitoring

For this project, sites within the APE will be flagged and ground disturbing activities avoided. If previously unknown heritage resources are encountered during implementation of the project, activities will be halted and the Trinity Archeologist will be notified.

Alternative 1 - No Action

Direct Effects

The No Action alternative will not cause any direct environmental consequences to heritage resources, as no activities likely to affect such resources or their attributes will occur.

Indirect Effects

Indirect effects may occur under the No Action alternative as there are known sites in the area that could be affected by wildfire. The proposed action is designed to mitigate wildfire conditions.

Cumulative Effects

Past wildfires have affected heritage resources by consuming prehistoric and historic structures, features and fabrics. Heritage resources within the identified project area have features and fabric that could be lost from the continued effects of high-intensity wildfire.

Alternative 2 & 3

Direct Effects

Known sites will not be affected by project activities in either Alternative 2 or 3 because the project was designed to restrict ground disturbing activities near known sites. Project specific management plans that provide site protection have been developed (information resides with the Trinity Archeologist - Arnold 2007).

There is the potential that sites (unanticipated discoveries) do exist that are currently obscured by vegetative cover. If unanticipated discoveries are found then ground disturbing activities will stop until the Trinity Archeologist can assess the situation.

Indirect Effects

Indirect effects of fuel reduction activities could be considered beneficial, as impacts from wildfires that may affect heritage resources would be reduced. No other indirect effects (e.g. erosion) are likely to occur to known heritage resources as a result of this project.

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects area is the Salt project area boundary. For context, historical impacts to heritage resources on National Forests in general are considered to assess potential benefits of vegetation treatments.

Since Alternative 2 and 3 will have no direct or indirect negative effects on cultural resources, there are no cumulative negative effects from this project.

Forest management practices over the past century, resulting in fuel accumulation, have contributed to the occurrence of intense, stand-replacing wildfire. While many types of cultural resources can survive low-severity fire with little or no damage, high-severity burns destroy or damage a wide range of cultural sites and artifacts.

Reduction of accumulated fuels may have the cumulative long-term beneficial effect of reducing the threat of wildfire damage to cultural resources in the Salt project area. Alternative 3 does not reduce accumulated fuels to the degree that Alternative 2 would, so the potential cumulative effects benefit of the thinning to reduce the threat of wildfire damage to cultural resources is not projected to last as long in Alternative 3 as it would with Alternative 2.

Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction

This project complies with the Shasta-Trinity National Forest plan and the Regional Programmatic Agreement with the California State Historic Preservation Office, as well as the requirements as provided in the Regulatory Framework, above.