FINLEY HFRA THIN PROJECT
Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact
And Forest Plan Amendment #42

USDA Forest Service
Methow Valley Ranger District
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest
Okanogan County, WA

BACKGROUND

I have decided to implement the proposed action described in the Finley HFRA Thin Project Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA was prepared under the authorities contained in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA, 2003). This project is designed to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) in the Finley Canyon area on the Methow Valley Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. The project is located approximately 7 miles east of Twisp, Washington in Township 38 North, Range 30 East, Section 3-5, 7-10 and 16-20 and Township 33 North, Range 23 East, Sections 20, 21, 28, 29 and 34, Willamette Meridian. Fire suppression over the past 75 years, favorable climatic conditions, vegetation growth and dead fuels resulting from insects and diseases have resulted in unacceptable risk of intense wildfire. The high density of trees contributes to mortality of trees because of competition for nutrients, water and sunlight. Insects and diseases are more likely to kill trees that grow in dense, crowded conditions. Diseased trees, insect killed trees and down fuel are creating continuous fuel ladders from the ground to the tree crowns (EA, page 1).

The project area is adjacent to a developed residential area in the Finley Canyon area of middle Methow Valley occupied by several seasonal and permanent residences. This area is identified as WUI by the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (OCCWP) and thus qualifies as WUI under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA, 2003). All project treatments are within 1 ½ miles of a community at risk because the homes in Finley Canyon exhibit basic infrastructure and are adjacent to Federal lands exhibiting timber stand conditions conducive to large-scale wildland fire disturbance events that pose a substantial threat to both human life and property.

The risk of wildland fire is based on the fact that many of the fuels surrounding the project area are Condition Class 3.

Condition Class 3 circumstances exist when:

> there is a high risk of losing key ecosystem components from fire;
> fire frequencies have departed from historical frequencies by multiple return intervals, resulting in dramatic changes to the size, frequency, intensity, or severity of fires, or landscape patterns, and;
> vegetation attributes have been significantly altered from historic range of the attributes (EA, page 2).

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Decision

The proposed action will treat approximately 133 acres to reduce fuel loading by reducing three fuel layers: crown or canopy fuels, ladder fuels that move fire from the ground into the tree crowns, and ground fuels. All 133 acres will be commercially thinned to reduce fuels, followed by pre-commercial thinning to reduce remaining ladder fuels. Commercial fuel treatments will be accomplished by thinning generally small diameter trees using ground based equipment. The focus of thinning will be largely on smaller diameter trees found either below the main forest canopy or within the canopy where tree crown density will allow the spread of crown fire. Pre-commercial treatments will further reduce ladder fuels and the continuity of the tree crowns. Surface fuel reduction will be accomplished utilizing handpiling or excavator piling and burning piles, and/or underburning. Commercial thinning and the application of prescribed fire will occur within some Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas to protect structures and/or escape routes, and ecosystem values. No new system roads will be constructed or reconstructed. Approximately 0.5 miles of new temporary roads will be constructed to provide access to safe landings. All temporary roads and an additional 0.5 miles of currently open road will be closed following use for logging (EA, pages 2-1 through 2-11). My decision includes all mitigation and monitoring measures listed on pages 2-6 to 2-12 of the EA.

Errata:

Corrected vicinity and proposed action maps are attached to this decision. Although the acres displayed and analyzed in the EA are correct, these two maps showed unit 7 different than the actual unit 7.

Pages 3-12, 3-25, and 3-59 all refer to the need to amend riparian standard 4c in Regional Forester Amendment #2. This is an error. The riparian standards in Amendment #2 were replaced with PACFISH standards. The project meets PACFISH standards.

Page 3-86, second paragraph: change “crow” to “crown”.

Forest Plan Amendment #42

Implementation of this project requires a non-significant, site-specific amendment of the Okanogan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan, 1989).

The Forest Plan would be amended to allow winter logging in MA 26 (unit 1) where winter harvest operations are normally restricted (FP standard MA26-20j). Operational restrictions consistent with the Forest Plan would be inconsistent with the need to protect soils and riparian character in this area where treatments are necessary to protect lives, homes, structures, and resources. Due to the limited use of this area by wintering deer, potential effects to deer were determined, by the district wildlife biologist, to be at levels that would not be detrimental.

This is a non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan for the following reasons, based on criteria found in the Forest Service Land and Resource Management Planning Handbook (FSM 1926.51):

Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.

- This amendment would not change management direction for the rest of the 1.7 million acre Okanogan National Forest.

- This amendment does not change any management prescriptions and furthers the desired future condition identified for Management Area 26 regarding riparian and habitat maintenance.

Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.

- Although the project would slightly reduce security for wintering deer in MA 26, more sustainable deer habitat would be provided in the long term. The goal of MA 26 to provide timber while providing for the protection of wildlife habitat and other resources would be met.

- Winter logging would only be required on 49 acres in an area that is used only on a limited basis by wintering deer, as determined by District Wildlife Biologist.

Minor Changes in standards and guidelines:

- This amendment only apply to this site-specific area of approximately 49 acres in MA 26 within the project area (unit 1) for the duration of about 2 years. The project area is in a high frequency fire regime. The Forest Plan requires limiting the number of acres burned by habitat damaging wildfire in the management area.

Opportunities for additional projects or activities that will contribute to achievement of the Management Prescription

- This amendment does not change any management prescriptions and furthers the desired future condition identified for Management Area 26 regarding riparian and habitat maintenance.

Decision Rationale

I have chosen to implement this proposed action because it will reduce hazardous fuels in an area near several private residences and developed private lands in an area prone to fire starts. This project will reduce risk to homes, structures and resources in the area

by reducing existing fuels thereby providing for effective defensible space in the forest surrounding these developed lands and resources. Additionally the treatments will allow for safer egress and firefighter safety should a fire start (EA, page 3-11 to 3-12). The risk of uncharacteristic wildfire affecting forest ecosystem components will be substantially reduced by increasing the canopy base height and reducing the density of the crowns, increasing potential for stands to survive frequent fire (EA, page 3-12). Treatments will increase firefighter safety during wildland fire by helping to keep fire on the ground and allowing for safe escape routes (EA, page 3-12).

My conclusion is based upon a review of the record that shows a thorough review of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Only the proposed action was considered as part of this project because it met the criteria for wildland-urban interface as defined by the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and all treatments are within 1½ miles of at-risk communities (EA, page 1-2 and Page 2-1). However, information is presented in the EA about the effects of not taking action, in the Fire/Fuels section (EA, pages 3-2 to 3-17).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Collaboration

The Methow Communities Wildfire Protection Plan (MCWPP) recommends that Forest Service continue coordinating fuels reduction and forest health projects on lands adjacent to private lands within the Methow CWPP area. This Plan was prepared in a collaborative effort by a group of local stakeholders and other interested agencies (including the Forest Service), identified as the Methow Community Fire Plan Coordinating Group (MCFPCG). The Methow CWPP plan has been incorporated into the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan along with other Okanogan County Communities wildfire protection planning efforts. This project lies within the Wildland Urban Interface as identified in both plans and was specifically identified as a potential project to meet objectives in the Okanogan County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Okanogan County 2006).

The following project specific collaborative efforts were undertaken on this project:

> Representatives from the Methow Valley Ranger District participated in collaborative efforts to develop the Methow CWPP and Okanogan County CWPP. The Finley HFRA project was specifically identified and included as WUI in the Okanogan County CWPP.
> A meeting was held with the chair of the MVFPCG, Lorah Waters, on January 17, 2008 to inform the group of initiation of the specific planning for this project as identified in the Okanogan County CWPP, and to organize future collaborative effort in the planning process.
> The project was presented to the Okanogan County Wildfire Protection Planning Group by Lorah Waters. At that time interest was expressed by the Okanogan

County Coordinating Group to continue collaboration with the Forest Service on this and other such projects. The Forest Service has and will continue to be represented in this group planning and collaboration efforts.
A meeting was held on February 20, 2008 with local land owners and interested public involved in collaboration efforts, to present and develop the project plan for Finley HFRA Thin and other HFRA projects in the Methow Valley. At that meeting it was decided that this collaboration effort will continue as the project is prepared and implemented.

EA, page 1-9

Consultation

Separate government-to-government consultation was conducted with the Yakama Indian Nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. Letters were mailed to both governments on April 3, 2006. Neither government raised any issues with the proposed project.

The State Historic Preservation Office was consulted with the findings relating to this project on December 5, 2005. No concerns were expressed.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was completed in July 9, 2008 and concurrence was received on July 28, 2008.

EA, page 1-9

Scoping

The proposed action was developed by a District Interdisciplinary team following identification of the project area as a potential project to implement objectives of the MCWPP. Project scoping was conducted by:

Sending a scoping letter to Federal, State, and local agencies, adjacent property owners, and the public on January 18, 2008, along with an invitation to a public "open house" planned for February, 20, 2006.
Holding a public "open house" project collaboration meeting on February 20, attended by approximately 20 people who offered ideas, issues, concerns, and support for projects like Finley HFRA Thin.

The proposed action presented in this document is the refined proposal developed subsequent to the scoping period and collaboration meetings (EA page 1-10).

EA, page 1-10

Issues

Issues identified during scoping are normally addressed by developing alternatives to the proposed action; however, no alternatives are required for this HFRA project (EA, page 2-1). Instead, the project team considered all the comments received during

collaboration and scoping and refined the proposal presented in Chapter 2 to address the following issues (EA, pages 1-10 to 1-11):

1. *Prescribed burning may expose individuals to unhealthy smoke* – A mitigation measure requires all burning to be coordinated and approved under federal, state, and local smoke dispersal regulations, and that steps are taken to avoid smoke intrusions into local smoke-sensitive areas (EA page 2-6). Smoke is expected to settle out quickly after burning, although smoke may linger in the short term (EA, page 2-13).

2. *Mechanical treatments may adversely affect soil productivity* – Project design and soil impact mitigation measures were included in the proposal to maintain soil productivity and detrimental soil effects (EA pages 2-7 to 2-9).

3. *Wildlife habitat values may be adversely affected by activities and treatments, specifically deer winter range habitat and snag habitat* – Mitigation measures included assuring snag habitat retention (EA page 2-9 to 2-10). Impacts to wintering deer were estimated to be very minor due to limited use of area by wintering deer and the areas marginal winter range value (EA page 3-55).

4. *Timber harvest and fuels treatments in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) could degrade the quality of the riparian habitat* – Mitigation measures and operational restrictions were included to limit impacts to riparian habitat (EA page 2-9). Treatments are designed to improve riparian condition long-term (EA, pages 3-24, 3-49, 3-59).

5. *Commercial timber harvest in old growth could compromise old growth biological and structural diversity* - By design, the Project will not enter or treat Forest Plan definition old growth stands.

6. *Logging, fuels treatment and access may spread invasive weeds* – An integrated weed management plan was prepared for the project and prevention measures to mitigate potential weed spread were included (EA pages 2-10 to 2-11). These will limit the risk of introduction and spread of noxious weeds (EA, page 3-59).

7. *Public safety may be jeopardized by logging operations and associated impacts of mixed traffic, dust, winter travel and speed.* – A mitigation measure was included requiring coordination of public safety considerations during sale preparation and prior to logging operations (EA page 2-11).

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have determined, based on the *Finley HFRA Thin Environmental Assessment,* that this is not a major federal action individually or cumulatively that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination is based on analysis of the context and intensity of the environmental effects, including the following factors:

1. Analysis of the beneficial and adverse impacts (see EA Chapter 3 for full discussion of beneficial and adverse effects):

Beneficial Effects	Adverse Effects
Hydrology and Aquatic Habitat	
Watershed: No new permanent road construction is approved; temporary roads used by the project will be decommissioned which will reduce sedimentation. No increase in stream temperatures. 303(d) water quality parameter will remain unchanged because no created openings in RHCAs proposed (EA, pages 3-45 to 3-46). Fisheries – RHCA treatments designed to restore desired vegetation consistent with historic fuel loads, and treatments consistent with PACFISH because they avoid adverse impacts to Riparian Management Objectives (RMOs) (EA, page 3-49). All existing LWD retained during timber sale, and may increase in future as trees grow larger, then die and fall over (EA, page 3-49). Road closures on Forest road 4100-380 will correct an existing problem stream crossing (EA page 3-49). RMOs maintained. No effect on T/E/S fish or Essential Fish Habitat (EA, page 3-50).	Watershed - Slight water yield changes are below detection limits and will be used by existing vegetation. Slight sedimentation increases (EA, page 45). Fisheries – Development of large trees as a result of treatments would make more large woody debris available to fall into (EA, page 3-49). Some riparian vegetation reduced by fire, but because of the low intensity of the burns, sediment delivery is not expected. Cattle may have easier access to stream banks in some areas, although development of upland grass by opening the canopy may encourage livestock to graze away from stream channels (EA, page 3-49).
Vegetation	
No net loss of Late Old Structure (LOS). Decrease in stand density will allow for growth and increased survival and resiliency of residual stand (EA, pages 2-13, 2-14, 3-23). Timber stands treated to reduce risk of disease spread and reduce potential for insect damage including in riparian areas (EA, pages 3-23 to 3-25). No effect to T/E plant species (EA, page 3-52).	Potential that some trees and Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) retained after logging will be burned by prescribed fire although CWD requirements would still be met (EA, pages 2-13, 3-15).
Fire/Fuels	
Treatment areas changed from primarily Condition Class 3 to Condition Class 1. Fuel conditions along egress routes improved. Fuel loads reduced particularly adjacent to homes and structures. Higher potential to suppress fires before they reach homes and structures and improved firefighter safety following stand treatments (EA, pages 3-12 to 3-17).	Potential that some trees and Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) retained after logging will be burned by prescribed fire although CWD requirements would still be met (EA, pages 2-13, 3-15). Potential for short term smoke impacts to local residents.

Beneficial Effects	Adverse Effects
Visuals	
All visual quality objectives met. More stable, sustainable forest produced. Large tree character will be enhanced. More open character in stands. Riparian habitat scenically enhanced. (EA, page 3-93).	Stumps and slash will be visible. Some tree scorch will be visible short term. Potential to create soil disturbance from temporary road construction and decommissioning (EA, page 3-93).
Noxious Weeds	
Treatments will result in reduced risk of uncharacteristically high severity fire and the associated soil impacts which will limit new weed introduction. Closure of currently open roads will decrease potential for spread (EA, page 3-87)	Weeds may invade sites where mechanical treatment occurs, but prevention strategy will reduce potential (EA, page 3-87).
Wildlife	
Deer – Falling and limbing will provide winter forage in the short term and stand treatments will increase forage production long term. Proposal results in slightly more sustainable mule deer habitat (EA, page 3-55 to 3-56).	Short term disturbance during logging activities. Hiding cover reduced short term (EA, page 3-55).
Pileated Woodpecker –Thinning prescriptions may help grow additional large snags, so that future nesting and foraging habitat is available (EA page 3-58).	No snag loss anticipated (EA, page 3-57), however there is some potential for direct snag loss to provide for worker safety (EA, page 3-54).
Primary Cavity Excavators – Long term benefit from producing larger potential future snags (EA, pages 3-57).	No snag loss anticipated (EA, page 3-57), however there is some potential for direct snag loss to provide for worker safety (EA, page 3-54). Potential snag loss is mitigated by unit design and retention of defective trees for future snag candidates (EA page 3-57).
Ruffed Grouse –Stand treatment is specifically designed to enhance deciduous habitat for the suite of species represented by ruffed grouse (EA, page 3-59).	Fuels treatments in RHCAs have potential to scorch or torch individual trees (EA, page 3-13. This effect is mitigated by allowing prescribed to only back into RHCA buffers to limit impact to riparian vegetation (EA, page 2-9)
Sensitive Species– Habitat is enhanced long term by reducing risk of stand replacing wildfire. Beneficial impact to goshawk as aspen release will enhance habitat for ruffed grouse (a key prey species for goshawks) and for flycatcher by opening stands for insect forage (EA, pages 3-61 and 3-73).	Thinning and harvest could disturb squirrels and will space the trees further apart and make arboreal movement for western gray squirrels in those stands more difficult (EA page 3-73, 3-74).
Gray Wolf – May affect, but not likely to adversely affect. Thinning has the potential to open up stands so more sunlight would give shrub species a chance to develop more vigorously, which would provide improved food availability for prey base in the future (EA, pages 3-67).	Potential short term disturbance during project activities.
Grizzly Bear – May affect, but not likely	Although grizzly bears are not known to use the area,

Beneficial Effects	Adverse Effects
to adversely affect. No change in core habitat. No change in security habitat (EA, page 3-70, 3-71).	there is potential for short term disturbance during project activities if one were present (EA, page 3-71).
Soils	
Reducing overstory will release understory vegetation indirectly increasing pore space in compacted layers. CWD in excess of historic levels will be removed, reducing risk of future high intensity fire effects on soils (EA page 3-34 to 3-36).	Some soil compaction but mitigated by logging with helicopter, in winter, or with designated skid roads. Short term erosion increase but mitigated. Pile burning will heat soil but small diameter of material limits detrimental soil heating except in excavator piles, where acreage impacted is limited (EA, pages 3-34, 3-35, 3-37, 3-38).
Air Quality	
Air quality within State standards. Class 1 airsheds not expected to be impacted (EA, page 3-15).	Increase in PM10, PM2.5 and TSP but short duration. Potential for visibility impacts, but these impacts are short term. Some smoke impacts residents, but mitigated by smoke dispersal requirements (EA, page 3-15).

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety:

There are limited health and safety hazards to Forest Service employees, permittees, and the general public from the project. None are unusual or unique to this project. Recreationists, home owners and permittees could encounter logging traffic or be exposed to smoke during burning. All burning will be done under State Smoke Management Requirements, and will maintain air quality within State standards (see EA, page 2-6, 3-15). Safety of area greatly improved for homeowners, recreationists and fire fighters by creating safe escape routes, safer fire suppression conditions, and an increased ability to protect homes and structures in the area (EA, pages 3-12 to 3-16).

3. The unique characteristics of the geographic area:

No prime farmlands, parklands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas are found within the project area. No effects are expected to cultural resources or historic properties (EA, page 201). Riparian areas are protected by no harvest/no equipment RHCA buffers, and/or by harvest treatment designed to restore riparian vegetation within the RHCA (EA, pages 2-9, 3-24). Essential fish habitat will not be affected (EA, page 3-49).

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:

There has been no scientifically backed information presented that indicates substantial controversy about the effects disclosed in the Finley HFRA Thin EA.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks:

There were no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks identified for the Finley HFRA Thin EA. Activities approved in this decision notice are routine projects similar to those that have been implemented under the Okanogan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan over the past 18 years. None are unique or involve unknown risks.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects:

Activities approved in this decision notice are routine projects similar to those that have been implemented under the Okanogan National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan over the past 18 years. None are new or precedent setting.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant impacts:

Each resource effects analysis contained in the Finley HFRA Thin EA discusses cumulative effects; none were found to be significant (EA, Chapter 3).

8. The degree to which the action may affect scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

There are no scientific resources in the Finley HFRA Thin EA. No districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected. No effects are expected to cultural or historical resources (EA, page 3-100). Should any undiscovered sites be located during project activities, standard contractual requirements will stop work until the Forest Archaeologist could review such site. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation and the Yakama Nation were consulted on this project; no concerns were raised by either Tribal government. The State Historic Preservation Office was consulted and concurred on this project (EA, page 1-9).

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect endangered or threatened species or habitats:

The effects on endangered or threatened species and their habitats is discussed in the Biological Assessments in the Analysis File, with results summarized in the EA on pages 3-74 for wildlife, pages 3-50 for aquatic species, and page 3-53 for plants.

Endangered or threatened species that may inhabit the area will not be significantly affected. No critical habitat will be affected. The project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the gray wolf and grizzly bear (EA, pages 3-74) and no effect on the Canada lynx because there is no habitat in the project area (EA, page 3-72). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the Biological Assessment's findings on July 28, 2008. The project will have no effect on Federally listed aquatic species (EA, pages 3-50) or Essential Fish Habitat (EA, page 3-50). The project will have no effect on threatened or endangered plant species (EA pages 3-53).

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of environmental laws or requirements.

Discussion of compliance with environmental laws or requirements is identified in the following section on compliance with other laws and regulations. This project will not violate any environmental laws or regulations.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This project was prepared consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1500), the Forest Service NEPA regulations (36 CFR 220) and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (see discussion on HFRA above). This decision is consistent with the National Forest Management Act and the intent of the Forest Plan's long-term Goals and Objectives listed in the LRMP, Regional Forester Amendment #2 and with PACFISH. The project was designed in conformance with the LRMP Forest-wide and Management Area standards and guidelines, with the exception of the short-term Forest Plan amendment identified previously in this document, management area specific direction, Regional Forester Amendment #2, and with standards and guidelines in PACFISH.

The project is located in Forest Plan Management Areas 14 and 26, which allow for timber harvest activities that meet the goals and objectives of those management areas. Soils and vegetation will be protected by pre-designated skid trails to meet spacing requirements or over the snow and frozen ground operations (EA, page 2-8). Riparian areas and wetlands (RHCAs) will be protected by no-harvest buffers or treatments within RHCAs are designed to restore desired vegetation characteristics consistent with basic historic fuel loads and avoid adverse impacts to RMOs, and fish (EA, page 2-9). Prescribed fire will be permitted to back into the RHCAs where no harvest is proposed, to avoid the need to construct firelines and the subsequent soil disturbance and compaction (EA page 2-9). The project meets all Amendment #2 standards, including long-term development of late and old structure (EA page 3-19), while retaining trees greater than 21 inches (EA, page 2-9), connectivity (EA, page 3-59), snags (EA page 3-57), down logs (EA page 3-57), and goshawk habitat (EA page 3-61). The project is designed to meet Clean Air Act standards; air quality will only be slightly affected and burning will be conducted during unstable atmospheric conditions to dilute and disperse pollutants (EA, page 3-15). Air quality in the Pasayten Wilderness, the nearest Class I Airshed is not expected to be affected (EA page 3-15). Clean Water Act standards will be met. Very little sedimentation and no increase in temperature are expected due to designated skid trails, over the snow logging and riparian habitat protections measures (EA pages 3-35, 3-46, and 3-49). No impacts to wetlands or floodplains, or prime range or farm lands are expected (EA, page 3-104). Potential prime forest land will be moved toward historic vegetation and fuels conditions, and insects and disease will be reduced (EA, pages 3-23 to 3-26). No wild and scenic rivers or potentially eligible wild and scenic rivers are found in the project area (EA, page 3-104). The activities are not likely to adversely affect any species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (EA, pages 3-50, 3-53, and 3-74 for fish, plants, and wildlife; Wildlife, Aquatic and Botany Biological Evaluations, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence letter in the project file). No Magnuson-Steven's Essential Fish Habitat will be affected (EA, page 3-50). The project is not expected to have any disproportional effects on minorities or low-income people (EA page 3-103 to 3-104). The National Historic Preservation Act requirements were met and reserved rights are not impacted (EA, pages 3-100 and 3-105).

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITY

A pre-decisional objection opportunity was offered on this project under 36 CFR 218. No objections were received; although Conservation Northwest filed comments on the EA, they subsequently clarified that their comments were not an objection. This project is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(i).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Because no objections were filed on this project, implementation may occur immediately. The Forest intends to offer project contracts for bid prior to September 30,2008.

CONTACT PERSON

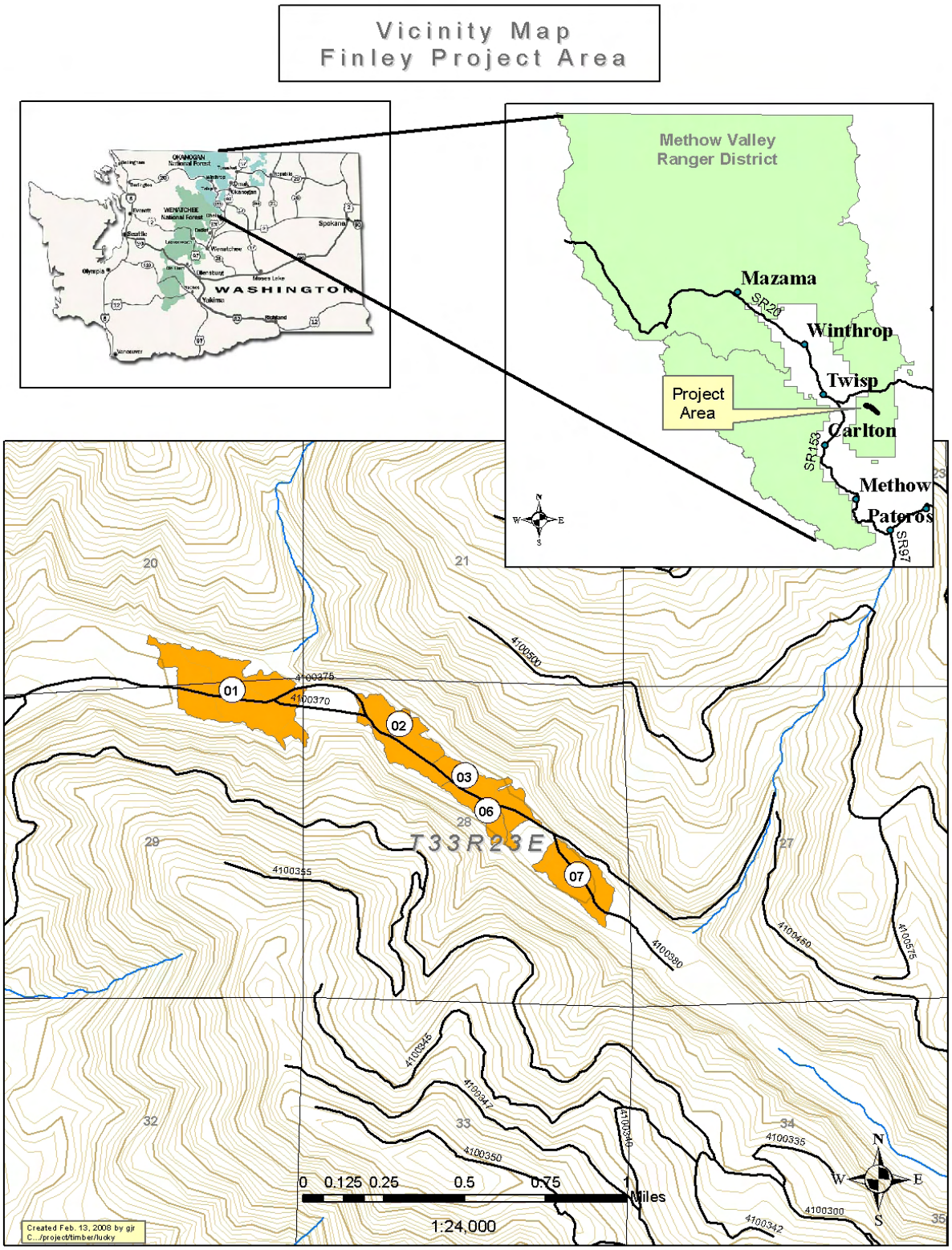
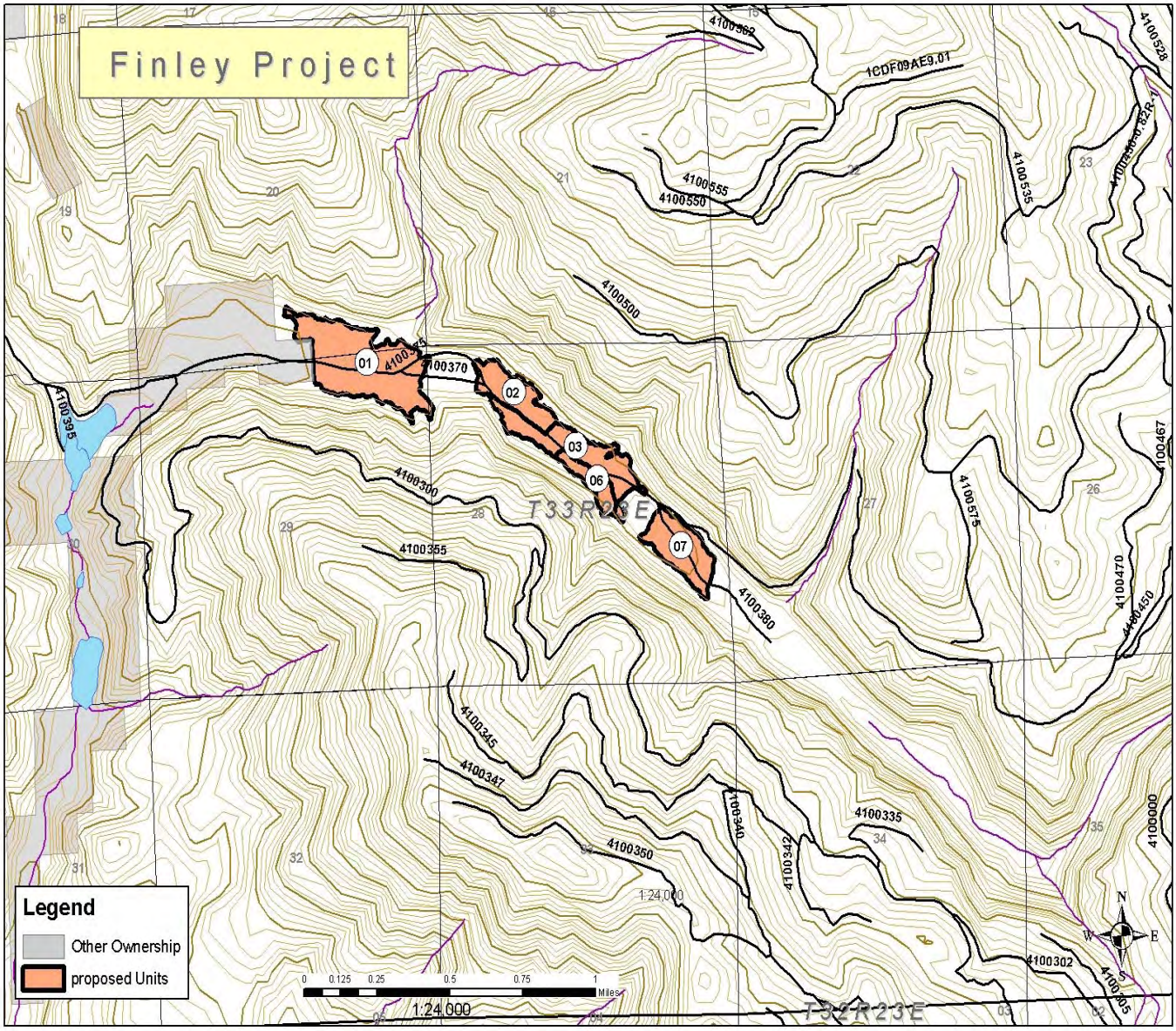
For further information regarding this project, contact Arlo Vander Woude, team leader, Methow Valley Ranger District, Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, 24 West Chewuch Rd., Winthrop, WA 99962 or at 509-996-4049.

Rebecca Lockett Heath

REBECCA LOCKETT HEATH
Forest Supervisor
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

9-4-08
DATE

Corrected Map 1-1: Vicinity Map



Corrected Map 2-1: Proposed Action – Finley HFRA Thin