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Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Northern Region

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# Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District Small Sales EIS Project

## Record Of Decision



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# COEUR D'ALENE RIVER RANGER DISTRICT

## SMALL SALES EIS PROJECT RECORD OF DECISION

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### OVERVIEW

Timber damage and mortality have occurred in numerous stands on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District as a result of ice storms, wind events, diseases, and insect infestations. Adjacent landowners have expressed concern with the increased fire risks associated with the amount of dead or dying timber in the vicinity of private ownership. Some of the stands adjacent to private ownership are currently managed for their old-growth characteristics. Other stands in need of treatment are within an inventoried roadless area.

We prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to disclose the effects of implementing management activities that would allow recovery of the economic value of dead and damaged timber; reduce fuels in areas of timber mortality to lower fire hazard (especially adjacent to private ownership); and promote long-term vegetative restoration in areas of timber mortality. The management activities were proposed in 18 areas across the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District.

The Draft EIS was published in April 2000. The EIS described 4 alternatives to meet the purpose and need, including the No-Action Alternative. After considering all of the information and comments related to the Small Sales project, we found that there were only minor changes needed for the Final EIS. As provided in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (Chapter 20), we prepared a supplement that served as Errata to the Draft EIS, identifying specific changes and providing response to public comments, with a new cover page. Those changes, along with the Draft EIS, constituted the Final EIS.

The Final EIS and Record of Decision to implement Alternative 4 (with modifications) were issued in July 2000. The Decision was appealed. Upon review, the Appeal Deciding Officer reversed the decision, citing inadequate documentation of the cumulative effects analysis. In January 2001, we announced our intention to revise the Final EIS and issue a new decision. The Revised Final EIS was published in April 2001. Changes were made based on review of the Draft EIS, both by the public and within the agency, and during the appeal review process. Corrections of typographical or factual errors were made as necessary. Editorial changes were made for clarification and readability throughout the document. In addition, the following substantive changes were made:

- *The changes were documented in an EIS format, rather than the Draft EIS Errata format that was used earlier in the process, to make the document easier for the public to review.*
- *The analyses and documentation were supplemented, improved or modified in the resource discussions (Chapter III), the reasonably foreseeable activities (Chapter II), comparison of alternatives (Chapter II), and analysis area maps (Final EIS map packet).*
- *Response was made to an additional comment received after notification of our intent to prepare a revised Final EIS (Appendix A – Public Involvement).*

There were no new alternatives proposed, and the alternatives considered were not modified. The public was provided 30 days in which to review the Revised Final EIS prior to my making a decision. For clarity, the Revised Final EIS is referred to in this decision as simply the "EIS."

## PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action (represented by **Alternative 2**) was to:

- 1) *Harvest dead and dying trees in areas attacked by bark beetles or that have sustained ice and snow damage using salvage and regeneration harvest methods;*
- 2) *through timber harvest and associated planting, restore long-lived seral tree species such as white pine, western larch and Ponderosa pine in stands where bark beetles, root disease, and storm damage have killed a substantial portion of the basal area of the stand;*
- 3) *enhance growth and vigor of existing Ponderosa pine and larch through improvement cutting or thinning to reduce competition for light and nutrients; and*
- 4) *reduce the potential for stand-replacing fires (especially adjacent to private ownership) through timber harvest and a variety of fuel treatment methods.*

Under the Proposed Action, timber harvest and fuels treatment would occur on a total of 1,433 acres using a combination of harvest prescriptions and fuel treatments. Approximately 438 acres of ecosystem burning would occur to further reduce fuels, improve winter forage for big game and to re-introduce fire as an integral part of the ecosystem (225 acres of this would occur within an inventoried roadless area). Less than one mile of temporary road would need to be constructed to facilitate removal of harvested timber. Approximately 159 acres of timber harvest was proposed in stands of allocated old growth and 52 acres proposed within an inventoried roadless area. No road construction would occur within the roadless area.

## ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

In addition to the No-Action Alternative required by NEPA and NFMA, two alternatives to the proposed action were analyzed in detail. Briefly, **Alternative 3** would harvest only dead and dying trees in areas with mortality caused by Douglas-fir beetles or where there is substantial ice and snow damage. This harvest would occur in the same areas and on the same number of acres as proposed under Alternative 2, except that only the salvage harvest method would be used. The fuels treatment activities would be the same as under Alternative 2, but the ecosystem burning would not occur.

**Alternative 4** would be essentially the same as Alternative 2, except that no ecosystem burning activities were proposed, and no harvesting would take place in any allocated or recruitment old growth stands or in any inventoried roadless areas.

## CORRECTIONS

After publication of the Revised Final EIS, it was determined that data for three past harvest units (totaling 55 acres) in the East Rutherford Project Area was tracked through the TSRMS database, but did not carry over into the GIS mapping layers of the analysis. The impacts of these three units have been assessed, with the following findings:

Vegetation: There are an additional 55 acres of past shelterwood harvest (10% of the analysis area) than displayed in the Revised Final EIS. These 55 acres are displayed as mature timber, and should be in the seedlings/saplings category. In addition, 55 acres of Douglas-fir cover type should be changed to ponderosa pine. All harvests under the Selected Alternative are salvage treatments and will not create new openings, so the change in existing conditions does not change the treatment method.

Water/fisheries: The 55 acres of past shelterwood harvest do not change the effects analysis for water and fisheries resources, because the WATSED models are based on the data in the TSMRS system, which

included the data for the three units. It was only the GIS layer that did not include the three units, which does not affect the predicted effects estimated by the WATSED model.

**Wildlife:** The wildlife analysis model did not include the three past harvest areas. Including the 55 acres of past shelterwood harvest results in 39 acres less suitable fisher habitat (from 8,217 to 8,178 acres); and 10 acres less suitable goshawk habitat (from 6,625 to 6,615 acres). There is no change to flammulated owl habitat as a result of the three units. The wildlife biologist has determined that the impact of these three units is minor, and does not change the determination of effects on species, nor does it increase concerns over any of the proposed treatments.

Harvest treatments are proposed in the East Rutherford project area under Alternatives 2 and 3. No harvest treatments are proposed in the area under Alternative 4.

Maps and a discussion of effects to vegetation, water resources, and wildlife is provided in the Project Files.

## **SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

I have selected **Alternative 4** for implementation, with two modifications:

1. *Approximately 438 acres of ecosystem burning (proposed and analyzed under Alternative 2) will occur under this Selected Alternative. The ecosystem burning will improve winter forage for big-game in Management Area 4, and re-introduce fire into the ecosystem of the area. This will likely decrease the risk of stand-replacing fires, because accumulated woody debris and understory vegetation will be reduced.*
2. *Timber harvest in Cougar Unit 4 and Prichard Units 23 and 24 have been changed from regeneration harvest to salvage, in order to meet visual quality objectives for the area.*

Alternative 4 is described on page II-25 of the EIS. From a vegetation standpoint, the objective of the Selected Alternative is to harvest dead and dying trees in areas attacked by bark beetles or that sustained ice and snow damage in 1996/97, and to restore long-lived seral tree species such as white pine, western larch and Ponderosa pine in stands where a substantial portion of the basal area of the stand has been killed. In some stands, growth and vigor of existing Ponderosa pine and larch will be enhanced through improvement cutting or thinning to reduce competition. Please refer to Attachment B for specific unit information.

Most stands will be treated by salvage of trees killed by bark beetles (this includes trees that are attacked by beetles) and associated trees killed by root disease, other pathogens or ice and snow damage. Douglas-fir and western larch with heavy dwarf mistletoe infestations may also be removed from stands with beetle mortality. Incidental green trees may need to be removed from skyline corridors or skid trails, or for safety reasons.

Regeneration harvests will be used in stands where most trees have been killed and retention of the residual live trees is not necessary to meet visual quality and wildlife objectives. Some green trees not affected by bark beetles may be removed from these stands in order to create a suitable environment for the establishment of seral species. Logging slash and competing vegetation will be burned, or piled and burned, prior to planting with the desired species. Regeneration harvests will range from two to approximately 12 acres in size, depending on the extent of Douglas-fir beetle mortality and existing root disease and ice storm damage. These openings will retain groups of trees and/or scattered individual trees that have been unaffected by the bark beetle infestation. Generally, these regeneration harvests will retain less than 30 percent of the stand basal area.

Ecosystem burning will occur on approximately 438 acres (225 acres in the East Rutherford analysis area and 213 acres in the Prichard Creek analysis area) to improve winter forage for big-game in Management Area 4, and to re-introduce fire into the ecosystem. This burning will likely decrease the risk of stand-replacing fires, because accumulated woody debris and understory vegetation will be reduced (EIS, pages III-47, 49).

The following table displays the estimated amount of harvest by silvicultural prescription, road work, and yarding methods that will occur under the Selected Alternative. Additional details of the Selected Alternative are provided under “Features of the Selected Alternative” and Attachment A (“Specific Unit Information”).

**Table 1. Activities that will occur under the Selected Alternative (modified Alternative 4).**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Estimated Amount</b>
Timber Harvest (Acres):	
Improvement harvest	123
Regeneration	101
Salvage	903
Thinning	33
Total harvest acres	1,160
Fuels treatment (Acres)	
Grapple pile	35
Handpile	10
Jackpot	324
Lop and scatter	450
Top-attached	247
Underburning	94
Total fuel treatment acres	1,160
Ecosystem burning (acres)	438
Road Work (Miles)	
New road construction	0
Temporary road construction	0.8
Yarding Systems (Acres)	
Cable	223
Helicopter	397
Horse	7
Skyline	369
Tractor	163
Expected Harvest Volume:	
Timber volume (CCF) <i>I</i>	9,275
Timber volume (MMBF)	4.7

*1 CCF = 1 cunit (one hundred cubic feet), MMBF = million board feet*

## **CRITERIA FOR MY DECISION**

This Record of Decision documents the decisions I have made for this project, based on:

- *the extent to which each alternative addresses the purpose and need for action*
- *how well each alternative responds to environmental issues and concerns identified by the public, other agencies, and Forest Service resource specialists*
- *consistency with the goals and findings of Forest policy and legal mandates*
- *effects of the selected alternative in comparison to other alternatives considered*

## **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

As stated earlier, timber damage and mortality have occurred in numerous stands on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District as a result of ice storms, wind events, diseases, and insect infestations. Over the last two years, a widespread Douglas-fir beetle infestation has caused significant mortality to Douglas-fir trees. This mortality is scattered across the district, with concentrations on the western half of the district. In 1999, the Forest Service addressed larger areas of mortality through the Douglas-fir Beetle Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, 1999). Since that time, field and aerial reconnaissance have identified additional acres of mortality. These areas are generally smaller and more scattered than those identified under the Douglas-fir Beetle EIS.

The scope of that large project, time constraints due to the magnitude of lost timber value, differing rates of the visual detection, and additional beetle flights did not allow these new areas to be considered under the Douglas-fir Beetle EIS effort. In addition, the Douglas-fir Beetle Project did not allow for treatment within stands being managed for old-growth timber characteristics, since it was believed that the infestation had not changed the character of the old-growth stands on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District at that time. The project did not allow for treatment within inventoried roadless areas either, in the interests of accomplishing the analysis process in a reasonably timely manner.

Several adjacent landowners have expressed concern with the increased fire risks associated with the amount of dead or dying timber in the vicinity of private ownership. Some stands adjacent to private ownership are currently managed for their old-growth characteristics. Several stands are within an inventoried roadless area. The purpose of the proposed action was to:

- *allow recovery of the economic value of dead and damaged timber*
- *reduce fuels in areas of timber mortality to lower fire hazard (especially adjacent to private ownership)*
- *promote long-term vegetative restoration in areas of timber mortality*

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **Scoping Activities**

Scoping is an early process for identifying the issues related to the proposed action, and the extent of those issues. The public was notified of this project in several ways:

- *"Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions" for the IPNFs (January 2000 issue)*
- *Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (January 5, 2000)*
- *Legal ad in the newspaper of record (Spokesman-Review) dated January 11, 2000*
- *Letter to the public dated February 7, 2000*

Scoping activities also included a field trip to the area and newspaper articles (Project Files, Public Involvement). During scoping, letters were received from:

- *John Neirinckx II (adjacent landowner)*
- *Susan Weller (National Audubon Society)*
- *John Rider and Olivia Oare (adjacent landowners)*
- *Diane Riley (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Boise)*
- *Jeff Juel (Ecology Center)*
- *Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance)*

In addition to the letters, we received telephone calls from other landowners who identified similar concerns and had questions regarding possible management of national forest stands adjacent to their property. Documentation of these conversations is provided in the Project Files (“Public Involvement”). Appendix A of the Draft EIS identifies the issues of concern identified during scoping and how each was incorporated into or addressed by alternative development. Copies of letters received during scoping were published in the Draft EIS, Appendix A.

### **Draft EIS Review**

The Draft EIS was issued in April 2000 (EIS, page A-11). A total of 15 letters were received during the 45-day public comment period:

- Agencies**      *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Richard Parkin*  
*Idaho Department of Environmental Quality – Diane Riley*  
*Idaho Department of Environmental Quality – Jack Skille*  
*Idaho Fish and Game – Greg Tourtlotte*
- Organizations**      *Daugherty Logging Crew and Family*  
*Ecology Center & Alliance for the Wild Rockies – Jeff Juel*  
*Idaho Forest Owners Association – Amy Gillett*  
*Idaho Rivers United & Idaho Conservation League – Sara Denniston*  
*Kootenai Environmental Alliance – Mike Mihelich*  
*National Audubon Society – Susan Weller*
- Individuals**      *Charles and Sarah Gates*  
*Ron Giddings*  
*Walter W. Morris*  
*John Neirinckx II*  
*Dave Reynolds*

A letter was also received from USDI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, stating that they did not have any comments to offer on the Draft EIS.

Public comments related to proposed harvest and fuels treatment activities were mixed. Walter Morris, Dave Reynolds, Idaho Forest Owners Association, Daugherty Logging Crew & Family indicated support for the timber harvest activities in order to salvage the value of the damaged timber, reduce the spread of bark beetles, and reduce fire risk. An adjacent propoerty owner (John Neirinckx) strongly supported activities that will reduce the fire risk, expressing concern for the safety of homes, property, and lives.

Ron Giddings, Jeff Juel (Ecology Center), Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance), and Charles and Sarah Gates were opposed to the timber harvest. Susan Weller (National Audubon Society), Greg Tourtlotte (Idaho Fish and Game), and Ron Giddings expressed concerns with timber harvest within old growth areas. Coeur d’Alene Audubon is particularly opposed to entering old growth in the Thompson Creek area. Idaho Fish and Game did not oppose the timber harvest entirely, but stated they do not believe that there is strong enough rationale to deviate from the intent of the Forest Plan or to reduce the already short supply of old growth.

Jeff Juel (Ecology Center), Sarah Gates, and Sara Denniston (Idaho Rivers United & Idaho Conservation League) expressed concern with timber harvest within the roadless area. Juel and Denniston were specifically concerned that activities should not be implemented in the roadless area before there is a decision made on the National Forest Roadless Initiative. Diane Riley (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality) did not indicate preference of an alternative, but expressed concern that the issue of air quality be adequately addressed. Richard Parkin (Environmental Protection Agency) did not not indicate preference of

an alternative, but expressed concerns related to salvage of dead or dying trees in old growth stands, and related to reasonably foreseeable activities (specifically, whether these salvage sales will result in less pressure to harvest green trees). Substantive comments and our responses were disclosed in Appendix A of the EIS.

### **Administrative Review (Appeal) Process**

A Final EIS and Record of Decision to implement Alternative 4 (with modifications) was issued in July 2000. The decision was appealed. Upon review, the Appeal Deciding Officer reversed the decision, citing inadequate documentation of the cumulative effects analysis. Further information is provided in the Project Files (July 2000 Decision Appeal Process).

### **Revised Final EIS Review**

In January 2001, we announced that we would prepare a revised Final EIS and issue a new decision. Following our notice of intent to prepare a revised Final EIS, two letters were received from the public (EIS, page A-12). Mike Mihelich, Kootenai Environmental Alliance, provided comments that further elaborated on his earlier concerns (EIS, Appendix A, Comment Letter #06). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided a letter stating they had no additional comment on the Small Sales EIS. No new issues were identified by the public (EIS, page A-12). The Revised Final EIS was mailed to other agencies and interested members of the public in April 2001. A copy was also posted to the Forest's webpage.

The public was provided 30 days in which to review the document before I made and issued my decision. During the 30-day review, comments were received from Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance), Kenneth Brooten (adjacent landowner), and Jeff Juel (Ecology Center and Alliance for the Wild Rockies). Copies of their letters and our responses to their comments are provided with this decision document (Attachment E).

## **FINDINGS AND CONSISTENCY WITH LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICY**

Numerous laws, regulations and agency directives require that my decision be consistent with their provisions. The following discussion is not an all inclusive listing, but is intended to provide information on the areas raised as issues or comments by the public or other agencies.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

As described in the EIS (page II-1), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires analysis of projects to ensure the anticipated effects upon all resources within the project area are considered prior to project implementation (40 CFR 1502.16). The analysis for the Small Sales project followed the guidelines of NEPA as provided by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Alternatives were developed based on existing conditions, Forest Plan goals and objectives, and public concerns and recommendations. The project team used the "Federal Guide to Watershed Analysis – Environmental Analysis at the Watershed Scale" to focus on proposed activity areas, describe current conditions, and identify possible treatment alternatives (EIS, page A-9 and Project Files, "Alternative Development"). A total of four alternatives were considered in detail, including a no-action alternative as required by NEPA and NFMA (EIS, pages II-23 through II-26, "Alternative Descriptions"); an additional six alternatives were briefly considered but eliminated from further study (EIS, pages A-9 through A-11). The range of alternatives is appropriate given the scope of the proposal and the purpose and need for action (EIS, page I-1).

## **Natural Resources Agenda**

On March 2, 1998, Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck announced the Forest Service Natural Resource Agenda. The Agenda provides the Chief's focus for the Forest Service, and identifies specific areas where there will be added emphasis, including:

- *watershed health and restoration*
- *forest road policy*
- *sustainable forest management*
- *recreation*

As stated in the EIS (page II-1), the activities to be implemented under the Selected Alternative have been designed to be consistent with the goals and tentative direction provided under the Natural Resources Agenda to date. The purpose and need for this Small Sales project is to recover the economic value of dead and damaged timber, fuels reduction in areas of timber mortality, and to promote long-term vegetative objectives in areas of timber mortality. The salvage of this timber may provide the funding to finance some additional watershed restoration opportunities that have been identified during project development (EIS, pages II-20 through II-22). However, the timber to be salvaged under the Small Sales EIS is widely scattered over many areas of the district. The volume per acre is generally low and much of the wood to be removed is defective to a degree, with the risk of even further deterioration prior to actually removing the wood. With an emphasis on fire hazard reduction and associated costs, it is not likely that there will be much money generated to fund other activities such as watershed restoration (EIS, pages II-20 through II-22). A watershed restoration-only alternative was considered but dismissed from further consideration because it would not meet the purpose and need for this project (EIS, pages II-7 through II-9 and A-9 through A-11).

Forest road management is tiered to the Forest Plan (EIS, pages A-7 and A-8), and takes into consideration the proposed Forest Service Road Management and Transportation Rule and Roadless Area Conservation Policy, as discussed below.

Regeneration harvests will occur in stands in which the majority of the trees have been killed due to bark beetles, ice damage, or root disease. Following site preparation, regenerated stands will be planted with white pine, larch, and Ponderosa pine to promote stand structure and species composition that reduce susceptibility to insect and disease damage (EIS, page III-65). This is consistent with Forest Plan direction and the Natural Resources Agenda in terms of sustainable forest management.

The timber harvest and fuels treatment activities will likely cause some disturbance or interruptions to recreation visitors, but the disturbances will be of a temporary nature (EIS, pages A-8, A-9, and E-6). No developed recreation sites will be directly affected. Indirect effects might include the sounds of helicopters and logging trucks passing a recreation site. Recreation experiences may have to be achieved in another area of the forest setting until activities are complete. Activities will be accomplished using safety standards based on the Forest Service's Health and Safety Code Handbook (EIS, page A-8, "Public Safety").

## **Forest Service Road Management and Transportation System Rule**

On January 28, 1998, in an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (63 FR 4350), the Forest Service announced its intent to revise regulations concerning management of the national forest transportation system. In January 2001, the Forest Service issued a Final Rule regarding specific revisions to the road system rules at 36 CFR part 212 and to Forest Service administrative directives governing transportation analysis and management.

The roads policy provides basic procedural protection for inventoried roadless areas and contiguous unroaded areas from road building until the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (discussed below) becomes effective, and the Forest completes a forest-scale roads analysis and incorporates it into the Forest Plan.

One of the tools developed to meet objectives of the revised policy is an integrated, science-based roads analysis process that allows objective evaluation of the environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed road construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and decommissioning (USDA Forest Service, 1999, Misc. Rep. FS-643). The six-step process does not make decisions nor allocate lands for specific purposes. Rather, the analysis identifies and addresses a set of possible issues and applicable analysis questions that, when answered, produce information for forest line officer consideration about possible road construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning needs and opportunities.

This analysis tool was not available to us at the time the Small Sales proposal was being developed and analyzed. Consequently, the transportation analysis was conducted based on existing information and guidelines provided in the Forest Plan. The management of each road was determined based on the logging systems plan under each alternative.

I have reviewed the Selected Alternative in light of the January 2001 Forest Service Road Management and Transportation System Rule. My decision is in compliance with the direction provided by the rule, since no road construction or reconstruction is planned within the inventoried Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area, which is the only inventoried roadless area potentially affected by this proposal.

### **Roadless Area Conservation Rule**

On October 13, 1999, President Clinton directed the Forest Service to develop a proposal for managing some 50 million acres of roadless areas in the National Forests (EIS, page II-2). The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was published in the Federal Register on January 5, 2001, and was to become effective May 12, 2001. On May 10, 2001, the Idaho U.S. District Court preliminarily enjoined the Forest Service from implementing the Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

I have reviewed the Selected Alternative in light of the provisions of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which prohibits new road construction and reconstruction and prohibits the cutting, sale and removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands (with specific exceptions). My decision is in compliance with this policy as currently written. No road construction or reconstruction or timber harvest activities are planned within the inventoried Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area, the only inventoried roadless area potentially affected by this proposal (EIS, pages III-232 and 233).

### **Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project**

This analysis was guided by integrated ecological assessments and strategies that began in 1993 by direction from President Clinton to “develop a scientifically sound and ecosystem-based strategy for management of eastside forests.” This direction resulted in the combined Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service project known as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP). The ICBEMP project is discussed briefly in the EIS (pages II-2 and II-3).

All of the area analyzed under the Small Sales EIS is within ICBEMP Forest Cluster #4, which emphasizes reducing risk to ecological integrity and species viability (USDA Forest Service, 1996, Integrated Scientific Assessment for Ecosystem Management in the Interior Columbia Basin). The primary risks to ecological integrity within Forest Cluster #4 are to hydrologic and aquatic systems (from fire potential); late and old forest structures in managed areas; and risks in forest compositions that are susceptible to insect, disease, and fire. Activities that will occur under the Selected Alternative will address these primary risks in a manner consistent with Chapter 8 of the Integrated Scientific Assessment.

A Final EIS for the Interior Columbia Basin project was released in December 2000, with a “proposed” decision. Once a Record of Decision is signed, National Forests and BLM Districts will begin implementing the new strategy. Although the scientific findings are not part of the Forest Plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, they are expected to provide guidance for the revision of the Forest Plan. No decisions or guidelines for analysis have been made using this direction; however, the science behind the Interior Columbia Basin EIS is used extensively in the analysis for the Small Sales project. When available, information and direction provided in the ICBEMP Record of Decision will be reviewed to determine whether a correction, supplement, or revision to the Small Sales EIS is necessary, in compliance with the Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (Chapter 18).

### **Northern Region Assessment**

The Northern Region Assessment is briefly described in the EIS (pages II-3 and II-4). Findings of the assessment conclude that there are multiple areas of concern in the Northwest Zone of the Region, but that "this subregion holds the greatest opportunity for vegetation treatments and restoration with timber sales. From a social and economic standpoint, using timber harvest for ecological restoration would be a benefit to the many communities which still have a strong economic dependency, more so than in other zones in the Region. Aquatic restoration should be focused on specific needs based on the zone aquatic restoration strategy." The timber management (timber harvest) tool best fits with the forest types in northern Idaho and is essential, for example, to achieve the openings needed to restore white pine and larch, and maintain upland grass/shrub communities.

The timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuels treatment activities that will occur under the Selected Alternative are consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Northern Region Assessment.

### **Forest Plan for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests**

*All resource plans...are to be consistent with the Forest Plan [16 U.S.C. 1604(i)]. The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities [36 CFR 219.1(b)]. All administrative activities affecting the National Forest must be based on the Forest Plan [36 CFR 219.10(e)].*

Chapter II of the Forest Plan describes in detail Forest-wide management direction, goals, objectives, research needs, desired future condition and standards applicable to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF). The land allocation decisions made in the Forest Plan allocated lands within the project analysis areas to Management Areas 1, 4, 6, 9 and 19. Chapter III of the Forest Plan describes the Management Area direction for each land allocation for the IPNF.

I have evaluated features of the Selected Alternative against Forest Plan goals and objectives, as well as the resource standards for consistency with the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan is discussed briefly in Chapter II of the EIS (page II-5), with disclosure of consistency with Forest Plan standards for each resource in Chapter III of the EIS. All management activities included in the Selected Alternative are in full compliance with and generally exceed Forest Plan goals, objectives and standards, including the Inland Native Fish Strategy amendment to the Forest Plan. **For additional discussion of consistency with the Forest Plan, please refer to the discussion under “National Forest Management Act,” in this Record of Decision.**

### **Coeur d’Alene River Basin Geographic Assessment**

The Geographic Assessment for the Coeur d'Alene River basin is discussed in the EIS (pages II-5 and III-5). The assessment provides a description of the historic and current ecological, social, and economic conditions of the subbasin. The condition descriptions were used to characterize the analysis areas infested

by Douglas-fir beetles. Findings of the Geographic Assessment are very similar to more broad-scale conclusions found at the Columbia Basin and Northern Region scales. The Geographic Assessment suggests converting shade-tolerant/drought and fire-intolerant species to shade-intolerant/drought and fire-tolerant species (EIS, pages III-5 and III-6). Findings of the Geographic Assessment also indicate that there is an increased risk of stand-replacement fire on the drier habitat types due to fuel accumulations resulting from fire exclusion. The objectives of this project are consistent with the vegetative findings and recommendations of the Geographic Assessment.

The Geographic Assessment identified watersheds by three categories: properly functioning, functioning but at risk, and non-functioning. Those identified as non-functioning with serious terrestrial problems are generally of highest priority for restoration, followed by those that are functioning but at risk with serious terrestrial problems (EIS, page II-5). This Small Sales project focuses on those areas most affected by the beetles, not necessarily to areas identified as high priority under the Geographic Assessment. The purpose and need for this Small Sales project is to recover the economic value of dead and damaged timber, reduce fuels in areas of timber mortality, and to promote long-term vegetative objectives in areas of timber mortality. Although there are opportunities for watershed restoration (EIS, pages II-20 through II-22), restoration is not mandatory for project implementation, nor guaranteed to be implemented, but may be accomplished if funding becomes available. This project is widely scattered and small in scope in relation to the preceding Douglas-fir Beetle EIS, where more emphasis was given to restoration opportunities.

### **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

Within Section 7, federal agencies are required to carry out programs to conserve endangered and threatened species. Consultation is required to ensure that any action authorized, funded or carried out by a Federal agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. The Coeur d'Alene River District Wildlife Biologist, Fisheries Biologist, and Botanist evaluated the Proposed Action (represented by Alternative 2) in regard to Threatened and Endangered wildlife, fish and plant species. Findings are disclosed in the EIS (Chapter III) and summarized in the Biological Assessments and Biological Evaluations (Project Files). The effects occurring under the Selected Alternative (Alternative 4, modified) would be very similar to Alternative 2, but to a lesser extent because activities will occur on fewer acres under Alternative 4, and no harvest activities would occur within old growth or roadless areas. The Biological Assessment in its entirety is part of the Project Files (Document BA-2). The findings are summarized briefly below.

- **Wildlife:** *Due to a short-term increase in disturbance to big game, project activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect gray wolves. There will be no effect to bald eagle, lynx, or grizzly bear. The Selected Alternative is consistent with the January 10, 2001 Executive Order describing the Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. The analysis of effects to wildlife evaluated effects of proposed activities on neotropical landbirds (migratory birds), as disclosed in the EIS, Appendix A (Issues Not Discussed in Detail in this EIS). As more information and direction related to this Executive Order becomes available, the analysis and documentation related to the Small Sales FEIS project will be reviewed to determine whether a correction, supplement, or revision to the document is necessary, in compliance with Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (Chapter 18). (EIS, page III-220)*
- **Fish:** *No Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive fish species are found within the cumulative effects area for this project. Neither white sturgeon or their habitat are found presently or historically within the project area or any watershed potentially affected by this project. An evaluation of effects was completed for each of 14 area watersheds as described in the EIS (Water Resources/Fisheries). There will be no effect in eleven of the watersheds; project activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive fish species in three of the watershed analysis areas (Downey, Callis, and Lower Little North Fork of the Coeur*

*d'Alene River). With implementation of the Selected Alternative, the current conditions for species viability would be maintained or enhanced. This would occur by having no changes in stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, aquatic habitat diversity, cover complexity, and channel stability, with possible increases in habitat diversity, cover complexity, and channel stability where long-term reductions in risk would occur.*

- **Plants:** *There would be no effect to the Threatened plant species water howellia (*Howellia aquatilis*) and Ute ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) as a result of activities under Alternative 4 because suitable habitat does not occur in the project areas. There will be no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to these species as a result of the project activities. No critical habitat has yet been designated for *Spalding's silene*, so there would be no effects to critical habitat as a result of the project activities. *Spalding's catchfly* (*Silene spaldingii*) could be impacted by ground-disturbing activities such as harvesting or road construction. However, there is also an inherent risk if no action is taken to decrease the heavy fuel loadings on many of the sites. The heavy concentrations of fuels in and adjacent to potential *Spalding's catchfly* habitat constitute a risk of wildfire that could burn with a much higher intensity than would have occurred historically. The mitigation measures identified in this Record of Decision will lower the risk of potentially impacts to *Spalding's catchfly*. Project activities will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat.*

Based on these determinations, I find the Selected Alternative is consistent with the Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided written concurrence with our findings (Project Files, Document BA-1).

## **Clean Air Act**

The Forest-wide standard for air quality is to coordinate all Forest Service management activities to meet the requirements of the State Implementation Plans, Smoke Management Plan and Federal air quality standards (Forest Plan, page II-9). This will be done under the Selected Alternative, and burning will be conducted in a manner that will meet air quality requirements (EIS, page A-6).

The monitoring of air pollutants during prescribed burning seasons is used to eliminate burning during times when such activities would result in violations of the State Standards, including unacceptable impacts to non-attainment areas. The North Idaho/Montana Airshed Group monitors smoke management for air quality; the Forest Service voluntarily ceases burning operations to avoid violation of State standards. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests coordinate and schedule burning activities to maintain air quality. Burning plans addressing smoke management are prepared by qualified personnel. The Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District implements burning projects in Airshed #11; the monitoring of air pollutants during prescribed burning periods has not recorded any violations of the State standards to date.

Because use of prescribed fire will be based on these smoke management guidelines, current air quality standards will not be exceeded (EIS, page A-6). Over the long-term, prescribed fire may reduce total particulates by reducing the risk of large wildfires that cannot be managed for emissions. This project meets the Clean Air Act and state monitoring requirements through coordination with the State prior to burning, and the use of burning techniques that minimize smoke emissions (Project Files, Air Quality, Document AIR-1).

## **Clean Water Act**

The Clean Water Act (as amended, 33 U.S.C. 1323) directs the Forest Service to meet state, interstate and local substantive as well as procedural requirements with respect to control and abatement of pollution in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity. The Forest Service has the statutory authority to regulate, permit and enforce land-use activities on the National Forest System lands that affect water quality.

The Forest Service has agreements with the States to implement Best Management Practices (BMP) or Soil and Water Conservation Practices for all management activities to meet the objectives for Forest Practices. Monitoring would be designed to demonstrate the implementation of BMPs and provide feedback concerning their effectiveness in protecting water quality. Watershed conditions that contribute to water quality that is impaired would be improved through restoration projects and through scheduling of timber harvest and road building activities. Riparian areas would be managed to meet objectives for riparian-dependent resources (fish and wildlife habitats, water quality, stream channel integrity, vegetation, public water supplies).

Based on the Water Resources and Fisheries effects analyses in Chapter III (pages III-104 through III-159, and III-171 through III-180), measures outlined in the EIS to protect soil and water resources (pages II-27 and 28), and Soils information presented in the Project Files (Documents SOIL-2, SOIL-4, SOIL-6, and SOIL-9), I find Alternative 4 meets the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Under authority of the Clean Water Act, the EPA and the States must develop plans and objectives (TMDLs) that will eventually restore listed stream segments. In lieu of those plans, Forest Service will demonstrate or find that their actions will not result in a net substantial increase in the pollutant of concern or prohibit or delay potential recovery (IDHW, 1997; USFS, 1995). The Selected Alternative is consistent with the Clean Water Act and Water Quality Limited Listings. (EIS, page III-159).

## **Environmental Justice Act**

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, ordered federal agencies to identify and address the issue of environmental justice; i.e. adverse human health and environmental effects that disproportionately impact minority and low-income populations. Based on the composition of the affected communities and the cultural and economic factors, the Selected Alternative will have no adverse effects to human health and safety or environmental effects to minority, low-income, or any other segments of the population. (Please refer to the EIS, “Compliance With the Environmental Justice Act, page III-233, and in the Project Files, “Environmental Justice.”) There were no public comments related to environmental justice.

## **Recreational Fishing Act**

Executive Order 12962 (June 7, 1995) identifies objectives to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of federal actions on aquatic systems and recreational fisheries, and document those effects.

The analysis and documentation provided in the EIS meets the requirements of the Recreational Fishing Act. Information on the effects to aquatic systems is provided in the Chapter III “Water Resources” section of the EIS (pages III-97 through III-159). Information on the effects to fish species are discussed in the effects analysis and tables in the Chapter III “Fisheries” section of the EIS (pages III-169 through III-180). The tables display the potential effects by alternative and watershed, depending on which alternative is selected. The analysis discusses both habitat and populations. As populations and habitat are affected, either negatively or positively, the recreational fishing should respond similarly.

## **National Forest Management Act (NFMA)**

The National Forest Management Act and accompanying regulations require that several other specific findings be documented at the project level. The following addresses our findings related to:

- *Forest Plan Consistency*
- *Resource Protection*
- *Vegetation Manipulation*
- *Silvicultural Practices*
- *Even-aged Management*

### **Forest Plan Consistency (36 CFR 219.1(b))**

Management activities are to be consistent with the Forest Plan [16 USC 1604 (i)]. The Forest Plan guides management activities [36 CFR 219.1(b)]. Consistency with the Forest Plan is discussed in more detail in Chapter III of the EIS, by resource issue. The following provides a brief synopsis of consistency with the Forest Plan standards related to forest vegetation, fire and fuels, finances, watershed resources and fisheries, wildlife, scenery, and roadless areas.

**1. Forest Vegetation:** Forest Plan direction provides that timber management activities will be the primary process used to minimize the hazards of insects and diseases and will be accomplished by maintaining stand vigor and diversity of plant communities and tree species (Forest Plan II-8).

In most stands proposed for harvest, only dead and dying trees will be designated for removal. This is consistent with Forest Plan direction that stands which are "substantially damaged by fire, wind throw , insect or disease attack, or other catastrophe may be harvested where the salvage is consistent with silvicultural and environmental standards" (Forest Plan II-32).

Regeneration activities are proposed for stands in which the majority of the trees have been killed. Following site preparation, regenerated stands would be planted with seral species (white pine, larch, and ponderosa pine) to promote stand structures and species composition that reduce susceptibility to insect and disease damage. This is consistent with Forest Plan direction that "regeneration with species combinations that are least susceptible to root disease is the primary protection objective for the root rot diseases" (Forest Plan II-10) and that "reforestation will feature seral tree species" (Forest Plan II-32). All stands proposed for regeneration harvests are on lands suitable for timber production and can be adequately restocked within 5 years of the final harvest (IPNF Monitoring, 1998, page 7). In accordance with Forest Plan direction, stands will be regenerated with trees from seed that is well adapted to the specific site conditions and will be regenerated with a variety of species.

There is one 7-acre clearcut in the Potosi area of the Beaver Analysis Area. This stand has been so heavily hit by the Douglas-fir beetles that there are few live trees remaining in the stand. Although an effort will be made to retain some green overstory trees, the appearance of the stand will be of a clearcut with some reserve trees. Because of the heavy beetle infestation, clearcutting is the optimal silvicultural treatment in this stand; regeneration activities resulting in resilient, long-lived seral species will take place.

The Forest Plan states "openings created by even aged silviculture will be shaped and blended to forms of the natural terrain to the extent practicable; in most situations they will be limited to 40 acres. Creation of larger openings must conform with current Regional guidelines" (Forest Plan II-32). The Northern Region Guide and FSM 2400-R1 Supplement 2400-96-3 state that "where natural catastrophic events such as fire, windstorms, or insect and disease attacks have occurred, 40 acres may be exceeded without 60 day public review and Regional Forester approval, provided that the public is notified in advance and the

environmental analysis supports the decision” (FSM 2471.1). In two cases the level of beetle mortality has forced regeneration of openings that are adjacent or very close to existing openings resulting in openings greater than 40 acres. These cases are in the White area of the Beaver Creek analysis area and Shoshone analysis areas. Damage caused by a combination of Douglas-fir beetles, root disease and ice/wind damage have resulted in canopy openings similar to a shelterwood harvest; as a result, regeneration activities are now appropriate. In the White analysis area, the proposed 7-acre group shelterwood unit is within 150 feet of a previously regenerated unit of 44 acres. The previously harvested unit was harvested in 1992, certified regenerated in 1993 and will remain an opening hydrologically until the year 2007 and in terms of wildlife until 2072 depending on wildlife species. In the Shoshone analysis area, the proposed shelterwood treatments will result in 2 openings, one 5 acres and the other 4 acres, adjacent to a previously regenerated unit of 43 acres. The previously harvested unit was harvested in 1988, certified regenerated in 1990 and will remain an opening hydrologically until 2003 and in terms of wildlife until 2068 depending on wildlife species.

The Forest Plan for the IPNF states that planting, precommercial thinning, and commercial thinning will be an integral part of management of future timber stands (Forest Plan II-8). Improvement harvest and commercial thinning will occur in some stands where ponderosa pine and/or western larch are a major component (EIS, p. III-64 and II-65). The purpose is to improve vigor of the remaining trees and to maintain or enhance the diversity of plant communities.

**2. Fire and Fuels:** The goal of the Forest Plan is to provide efficient fire protection and fire use to help accomplish land management objectives (IPNF Forest Plan, Chapter II, pages II-10 and II-38). Various forms of fuels treatment will occur under the Selected Alternative, making progress towards reducing the potential intensities of wildfire (EIS, p. III-83). Even with this treatment, untreated areas and areas treated with salvage harvest alone will continue to trend toward vegetative characteristics that exceed the goals, objectives and standards established in the Forest Plan even with activity fuels treatments. Treatment of the activity fuels will moderate the near term fire risk due to the bark beetle attacks, however failure to apply vegetative manipulation techniques to shift stand composition to fire resilient species will not appreciably alter long-term fire risk and consequences.

**3. Finances:** Forest-wide goals, objectives, and standards for finances are not specifically addressed in the Forest Plan. This issue is addressed indirectly in the discussion of community stability. Chapter II of the Forest Plan states, "Management activities will continue to contribute to local employment, income, and lifestyles. The Forest will be managed to contribute to the increasing demand for recreation and resource protection while at the same time continuing to provide traditional employment opportunities in the woods product industry," (Forest Plan, page II-11, Objectives).

The Selected Alternative will meet this Forest Plan direction because it would result in forest products over both the short and long terms (EIS, page III-88). Timber harvest will contribute to continuing operation of local mills, directly and indirectly enhancing the local and state economy through employment and tax revenues (EIS, page III-86). Additionally, a portion of timber receipts from harvest on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District go directly to Kootenai and Shoshone Counties (Idaho) for public schools and roads, in compliance with the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393).

**4. Watershed Resources and Fisheries:** All alternatives are consistent with Forest Plan Standards for water (Forest Plan, page II-33) because of 1) the low level of harvest, 2) the distance between harvest units and the stream channel, 3) the low level of temporary road construction, 4) the location of temporary roads in the watershed, and the 5) implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's). Models, field data, monitoring data, and professional judgment were used in the analysis to approximate the effects of activities on the water resource (EIS, page III-159).

The Inland Native Fish Strategy has been implemented as amendments to the Forest Plan of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. All action alternatives would be consistent with this direction (EIS, pages III-27, III-28, and III-177 through III-179). The amendments require mitigation of environmental effects of management decisions. Specified riparian management goals and objectives have been developed, and Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA) are defined and delineated. Riparian management and Riparian Management Objectives (RMO) are addressed using site-specific analysis and supportive data, and watershed analyses. The strategy also specifies standards and guidelines, which must be applied for certain activities in RHCAs. These are incorporated into the action alternatives as specified in Chapter II.

Standards and guidelines from Inland Native Fish Strategy were used specifically to protect water and aquatic biota within the project area. Standard widths for defining interim Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas were utilized without modifications. The road management standards and guidelines were applied only to roads used or affected by the proposed project (timber sale, obliterated, closed or used for slash disposal or reforestation). The Road Management Objectives were applied only within the project area boundary, and only on those roads used for the harvesting or hauling of timber.

The Forest Plan directs that activities on National Forest System lands will be planned and executed to maintain existing water uses (Forest Plan, page II-29, Fish Standard 1) and that streams providing spawning and rearing habitat, which are considered critical to the maintenance of river and lake populations of special concern, will be managed at a standard higher than the 80 percent standard (Forest Plan, page II-30, Fish Standard 2). To maintain is defined as “limiting the effects from National Forest management activities to maintain at least 80 percent of fry emergence success in identified fishery streams.” This standard is no longer considered applicable. Since completion of the Forest Plan, the focus of fish habitat analysis has shifted away from fine sediments as a predictor of habitat quality and fish production. This shift has been supported by a cross-section of internal and external groups, including the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (personal communication with Ned Horner), Idaho Department of Lands, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. For additional information, please refer to the EIS (page III-178).

The IPNF Forest Plan provides six management goals that apply to streams of this analysis area, (Forest Plan Pages II-1 and II-2, Items 8, 9, 11, 13, 18, and 19). Among these goals are to “manage habitat to maintain populations of identified sensitive species of animals and plants” and to manage fisheries habitat to provide a carrying capacity that will allow an increase in the Forest’s trout population”. The Plan states that the objective in forest fisheries streams is “to maintain 80 percent of fry emergence success” and that sedimentation arising from land management activities will be managed to meet this objective (Forest Plan, page II-7). Appendix I further details: “In the event that cumulative effects of the proposed and past activities on stream sedimentation are projected to result in greater than a 20 percent reduction in fry emergence, a more detailed fishery/watershed analysis will be undertaken...before the environmental analysis is approved...”. The 1989 Forest Plan Evaluation and Monitoring Report documents the change away from use of the fry emergence standard (Item G-1, pages C-1 and C-2). It was determined that it was not a good monitoring tool to report stream health. Item G-1 was combined with an expanded Item G-3, which includes a more comprehensive array of fisheries and hydrology parameters.

The Forest Plan directs us to provide fish passage to suitable habitat areas by designing road crossings of streams to allow fish passage or by removing instream migration barriers. None of the alternatives would build any new (permanent) roads or create any new migration barriers (Forest Plan, page II-31, Fish Standard 4). No migration barriers are known to exist on the proposed haul routes within National Forest jurisdiction, therefore there are no known opportunities with this project.

Fish Standard 5 (Forest Plan, page II-31) instructs us to utilize data from stream, river, and lake inventories to prepare fishery prescriptions that coordinate fishery resource needs with other resource activities, and to pursue fish habitat improvement projects to improve habitat carrying capacities on selected streams. Data

and inventories have been and will continue to be collected on selected streams with other projects. Fish habitat improvement projects have been implemented and will continue to be a focus item across the Coeur d'Alene River Basin. The Small Sales EIS project is not one of those proposals.

Fish Standard 6 (Forest Plan, page II-31) directs us to coordinate management activities with water resource concerns as described in Management Area 16 (riparian corridors), Appendix I, and Appendix O of the Forest Plan. Design of the Selected Alternative was fully coordinated with the specifications found in the Forest Plan (Appendices I and O), and standards and goals stated for Management Area 16. Class I and II streams will receive protection beyond the requirements of the Forest Practices Act. The Selected Alternative was not designed to move all streams toward meeting Riparian Management Objectives. Generally the design was to stay out of riparian areas and reduce the effects of roads on stream channels within the project area by avoiding any new stream channel crossings associated with road construction. There will be no changes to large woody debris over the short term. Long-term increases in large woody debris will occur as a result of beetle mortality within Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs).

**5. Wildlife:** Forest Plan standards (Forest Plan, Chapter II, pages II-26 through II-29; Project Files, “Wildlife”), in compliance with NFMA, were incorporated into all alternatives. These standards addressed elk and elk goals, threatened and endangered species, sensitive species and old growth management. Elk habitat potential was calculated with a model that incorporates “Guidelines for Evaluating and Managing Summer Elk Habitat in Northern Idaho” as specified on page II-27 (Item 1c) of the Forest Plan. The Selected Alternative is consistent with Forest Plan management direction, goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for the management and protection of wildlife and species (EIS, pages III-191 through III-220).

**6. Scenery:** The Selected Alternative will meet the assigned Visual Quality Objectives, with the modification of Unit 4 in the Cougar Creek drainage and units 23 and 24 in the Prichard Creek drainage (EIS, page III-228). These units have been changed from regeneration harvest to salvage harvest in order to meet the Visual Quality Objectives for the area.

**7. Roadless Area:** The Forest Plan directs that roadless areas be managed based on the direction and goals established for the respective management area within which they are located (Forest Plan, Chapter II, page II-4). The Selected Alternative will not implement any activities in the Roadless Area under this decision (EIS, pages II-25, II-38, and III-230).

### **Resource Protection (36 CFR 219.27(a))**

The following statements address resource protection requirements of the National Forest Management Act:

- 1. Activities will conserve soil and water resources and will not allow significant or permanent impairment of the productivity of the land.** At the tributary scale, no direct or indirect effects to beneficial uses are anticipated (EIS, page II-35). The short-term increase in sediment associated with activities will be minimal, is not expected to have an effect on channel conditions, and will not be measurable at the tributary scale. The implementation of Best Management Practices and adherence to the Inland Native Fish Strategy standards and guidelines will provide protection for riparian habitat and control the majority of the sediment associated with these activities. The cumulative effects from management activities most likely will not be discernible at this scale for increases in peak flows or sediment over what would occur under the No-Action Alternative. Increase in flow will be primarily due to the mortality of trees from the Douglas-fir beetle. Additional mortality due to harvest of trees that are dying will not result in a measurable increase in magnitude or quantity of flows (EIS, pages II-35 and II-36, III-158 and III-159).

Alternative development was based in part on the “Soils Guidelines for NEPA Analysis” (Niehoff, 1998). To minimize erosion and ensure compliance with State water quality standards, all temporary

road construction and timber harvest associated with the Small Sales project will be completed using Best Management Practices (EIS, pages II-28, A-7). Please refer also to the EIS, Chapter III, Watershed Resources, and the Project Files, Soils.

2. **Activities will not affect most potentially serious or long-lasting hazards (flood, wind, erosion, etc.).** To minimize erosion and ensure compliance with State water quality standards, all road construction and timber harvest associated with this project will be completed using Best Management Practices (Attachment A, page A-2). As stated above, cumulative effects from management activities most likely will not be discernible at this scale for increases in peak flow over what would occur under the No-Action Alternative. The vegetative and fuels treatments will reduce the unwanted effects of catastrophic fire, should it occur, by reducing fuels concentrations. Under the Selected Alternative (and reasonably foreseeable activities), large fuel removal and treatments will reduce fuel accumulations, reintroduce seral species where present levels of stand mortality make this desirable, improve the health and vigor of some stands containing higher stocking of larch and ponderosa pine, and make progress toward reducing potential intensity and severity of wildfire in some stands (EIS, page III-80).
3. **The timber resource will be managed consistent with the Forest Plan objectives of minimizing hazards due to insects and disease by maintaining stand vigor and diversity of plant communities and tree species.** Timber harvest and associated reforestation will occur in stands where the majority of trees have been killed. Following site preparation, stands will be planted with seral species to promote stand structure and species composition that reduce susceptibility to insect and disease damage (EIS, page III-65).
4. **Water bodies and their values are appropriately protected.** In development of the alternatives, standards and guidelines of the Inland Native Fish Strategy were used specifically to protect water and aquatic biota within the Resource Area (EIS, page II-27). Streamside buffers will be applied along harvest units, in order to meet the riparian management objectives of maintaining slope stability in potentially sensitive areas, maintaining stream temperature, and providing a long-term supply of large woody debris. Stream channel buffer widths are identified on pages II-27 and II-28 of the EIS, and in Attachment A (page A-1) of this decision document. As stated under Item 1, above, no direct or indirect effects to beneficial uses of water resources are anticipated at the tributary scale (EIS, page II-35). The short-term increase in sediment associated with activities will be minimal, is not expected to have an effect on channel conditions, and will not be measurable at the tributary scale. The cumulative effects from management activities most likely will not be discernible at this scale for increases in peak flows or sediment over what would occur under the No-Action Alternative. Increase in flow will be primarily due to the mortality of trees from the Douglas-fir beetle. Additional mortality due to harvest of trees that are dying will not result in a measurable increase in magnitude or quantity of flows (EIS, pages II-35 and II-36, III-158 and III-159).
5. **The activities will provide for and maintain a diversity of plant and animal communities.** The Selected Alternative will increase vegetative diversity by reforesting with seral species on approximately 101 acres (EIS, page III-65). Harvests that improve existing ponderosa pine and western larch stands will be completed on about 156 acres. There will be no effect to either of the two Threatened plant species, or to the proposed Threatened plant species (EIS, page A-2). There are no Endangered plants identified for the IPNF. While some Sensitive plant individuals may be impacted by the implementation of activities, cumulative these effects will have insignificant impacts to Sensitive plant populations or suitable habitat (EIS, page A-2). Areas of high potential Sensitive plant habitat will be surveyed prior to implementation of the Selected Alternative (Attachment A, Mitigation, pages A-4 and A-5).

The Selected Alternative will maintain a diversity of animal communities. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with our finding that there will be no effect to bald eagle, lynx, or grizzly bear, and that the minor, short-term disturbance to big game may affect but is not likely to adversely affect gray wolves. (For more information regarding effects to Threatened, Endangered and Proposed species, please refer also to the Project Files, Biological Assessment, Document BA-2). There will be slight, short-term effects to some Sensitive species. Over the long-term, effects will be so slight as to not be measurable. For more information, please refer to the EIS, Chapter II, pages II-36 and II-37.

6. **Activities will either not affect or will maintain sufficient habitat for viable populations of existing native vertebrate species and management indicator species consistent with the multiple-use objectives established in the Forest Plan.** Due to a short-term increase in disturbance to big game, project activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect gray wolves. There will be no effect to bald eagle, lynx, or grizzly bear. There will be no measurable change to fisher, flammulated owl, or goshawk habitat (over the No-Action Alternative) as a result of harvest activities (EIS, pages II-36 and II-37). There will be a loss of snags and downed wood. However, design features for snags and downed woody material will ensure some habitat availability in harvest units (EIS, page II-37). There will be a slight reduction (approximately 1 percent) in elk habitat potential during sale activities in areas where roads are opened. This reduction will be minimized by use of gates (EIS, page II-37). Reduction in habitat potential during sale activities will be minimized under the Selected Alternative, because no activities will occur in three of the elk habitat units. Elk habitat potential will return to at least the pre-sale condition after activities are completed; there will be a slight increase in elk habitat potential in two elk habitat units (EIS, page II-38).
7. **Management prescriptions have been assessed prior to project implementation for potential physical, biological, aesthetic, cultural, engineering, and economic impacts of the Selected Alternative and are consistent with multiple uses planned for the area.** These potential impacts have been assessed and are disclosed in the EIS (Chapter III) with supporting information in the Project Files.
8. **Implementation of the Selected Alternative will not affect critical habitat for Threatened and Endangered species.** The Coeur d'Alene River District Wildlife Biologist, Fisheries Biologist, and Botanist evaluated the Proposed Action (represented by Alternative 2) in regard to Threatened and Endangered wildlife, fish and plant species. Findings are disclosed in the EIS (Chapter III) and summarized in the Biological Assessments and Biological Evaluations (Project Files). The effects occurring under the Selected Alternative (Alternative 4, modified) would be very similar to Alternative 2, but to a lesser extent because activities will occur on fewer acres under Alternative 4, and would not occur within old growth or roadless areas. The Biological Assessment in its entirety is part of the Project Files (Document BA-2). The findings are summarized briefly under “Endangered Species Act” on page 11 of this decision document. Please refer also to the EIS, Chapter III, Wildlife, and the Project Files (Document BA-1, Biological Assessment.).
9. **There are no right-of-way grants being issued as part of the activities.**
10. & 11. **The road construction associated with this project is designed according to standards appropriate to the planned uses, considering safety, costs of transportation and effects upon lands and resources.** There are short segments (totaling less than one mile) of temporary road needed under the Selected Alternative (EIS, page II-26). Temporary roads will be built, utilized, and closed in the same season under timber sale contract provision CT6.4, except for those roads needed for post-sale activities such as tree planting and slash treatment (EIS, page A-8). All new construction of temporary roads will meet standards and guidelines of the Inland Native Fish Strategy. (Please refer also to the environmental consequences discussions throughout Chapter III of the EIS, which address effects of proposed roads in relation to each resource.)

12. **Applicable Federal, State, and local air quality standards will be met.** The monitoring of air pollutants during prescribed burning seasons is used to eliminate burning during times when such activities would result in violations of the State Standards, including unacceptable impacts to non-attainment areas. The North Idaho/Montana Airshed Group monitors smoke management for air quality; the Forest Service voluntarily ceases burning operations to avoid violation of State standards. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests coordinate and schedule burning activities to maintain air quality. Burning plans addressing smoke management are prepared by qualified personnel. The Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District implements burning projects in Airshed #11; the monitoring of air pollutants during prescribed burning periods has not recorded any violations of the State standards to date. Because use of prescribed fire will be based on these smoke management guidelines, current air quality standards will not be exceeded (EIS, page A-6). Over the long-term, prescribed fire may reduce total particulates by reducing the risk of large wildfires that cannot be managed for emissions. This project meets the Clean Air Act and state monitoring requirements through coordination with the State prior to burning, and the use of burning techniques that minimize smoke emissions (Project Files, Air Quality).

### **Vegetation Manipulation (36 CFR 219.27(b))**

The following statements address vegetation manipulation requirements of the National Forest Management Act:

1. **Be best suited to the goals stated in the Forest Plan.** The Forest Plan allocated National Forest system lands in the analysis areas to Management Areas 1, 4, 6, 9 and 19. Goals for each management area are described in detail in the IPNF Forest Plan (Forest Plan, Chapter III). After review of the expected environmental consequences of the various alternatives (EIS, Chapter III), I believe the Selected Alternative is well suited to initiate Forest Plan direction and meet the multiple-use goals established for the area. Please refer to the “Forest Plan Consistency” discussion in this decision document (pages 14-17).
2. **Assure that technology and knowledge exists to adequately restock lands within five years after final harvest.** Technology and knowledge does exist to comply with this requirement (EIS, page III-65, and IPNF Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 1998, page 7). Please refer to the “Forest Plan Consistency” discussion in this decision document (page 14).
3. **Not be chosen primarily because they will give the greatest dollar return or greatest output of timber (although these factors shall be considered).** Economic factors were considered in my decision; however, the Selected Alternative was chosen primarily based on the benefits to the environment and responsiveness to Forest Plan goals and public desires. Alternative 4 does not have the highest economic value of the alternatives considered, and in fact would have the lowest present net value of the action alternatives considered (EIS, page III-88).
4. **Be chosen after considering potential effects on residual trees and adjacent stands.** The analysis considered the effects on residual trees and adjacent stands (Chapter III of the EIS, Forest Vegetation discussions, pages III-57 through III-61, III-64 and III-65; and Fire/Fuels discussions, pages II-34, III-74, III-75, III-77 through III-80, and III-83). These effects were considered in my decision. I find the treatments that will occur under the Selected Alternative are designed to protect reserve trees and adjacent stands, including riparian areas, to the extent possible.
5. **Be selected to avoid permanent impairment of site productivity and to ensure conservation of soil and water resources.** The use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), avoidance of problem soil areas, regulation of yarding and site preparation operations, and the application of specific

features of the Selected Alternative will assure that site productivity is maintained and soil and water resources are protected. Please refer to the EIS (Features Designed to Protect Resources, page II-28; and Consistency With the Forest Plan and Other Applicable Regulatory Direction (Water Resources), page III-159) and the Project Files, “Soils” (Documents SOIL 1, SOIL-2, and SOIL-3).

6. **Be selected to provide the desired effects on water quality and quantity, wildlife and fish habitat, regeneration of desired tree species, forage production, recreation uses, aesthetic values, and other resource yields.** After review of the EIS, I find that the Selected Alternative will provide the desired effects on vegetation resources within the project areas, and will have acceptable effects on water, wildlife, and soil resources within the project areas. Please refer to the discussions of effects to resources in Chapter III of the EIS, and the “Forest Plan Consistency” discussions in this decision document (pages 14-17).
7. **Be practical in terms of transportation and harvesting requirements and total costs of preparation, logging and administration.** Data presented in the EIS and Project Files relative to transportation, economics and harvesting requirements indicate to me that the selected alternative is feasible and practical. Please refer to the Financial discussions in the EIS (pages II-88 and III-92) and the Project Files (Transportation).

### **Silvicultural Practices (36 CFR 219.27(c))**

**No timber harvest, other than salvage sales or sales to protect other multiple-use values, shall occur on lands not suitable for timber production [16 U.S.C. 1604 (k)].**

Guidelines for determining suitability are found in the Forest Plan, and proposed harvest units are within productive habitat types as described in the Forest Plan. Tree harvest will occur within Management Areas 1, 4, 6, and 19 as described in the Forest Plan (Forest Plan, Chapter III). These Management Areas are considered suitable for timber management. Some activities also occur within Management Area 9, which is generally unscheduled for timber harvest. Inclusive in Management Area 9 are areas that are generally unscheduled due to visual sensitivity, but are fully capable for timber growth and survival. Selected activities, including timber salvage, are appropriate to protect other values, such as fuels reduction in the wildland-urban interface.

### **Even-aged Management (36 CFR 219.27(d))**

**When timber is to be harvested using an even-aged management system, a determination that the system is appropriate to meet the objectives and requirements of the Forest Plan must be made. Where clearcutting is to be used, it must be determined to be the optimum harvest method [16 U.S.C. 1604 (g)(3)(F)(i)].**

The Selected Alternative will employ the use of even-aged management systems (regeneration harvests) on approximately 10 percent of the acres to be harvested. Regeneration harvest will occur in stands where most trees have been killed and retention of the residual live trees is not necessary to meet visual quality and wildlife objectives (EIS, page III-65). Clearcutting is planned in one unit (Unit 8 in the Potosi analysis area); the method was selected based on the extent of mortality in the unit caused by Douglas-fir beetles. Reserve trees in the unit will be maintained for wildlife habitat. All other regeneration units will use the seedtree or shelterwood harvest methods.

The location and shape of openings that will be created by timber harvest under the Selected Alternative will achieve the desired combination of multiple-use objectives. Regeneration units range from approximately 2 to 12 acres in size. However, as described in the Revised Final EIS (page III-65) and under the Forest Plan

Consistency discussion for Forest Vegetation in this document (page 15), shelterwood harvest will occur in two areas of beetle mortality adjacent or very close to existing openings, which will result in openings greater than 40 acres. Damage caused by a combination of Douglas-fir beetles, root disease and ice/wind damage have already resulted in canopy openings similar to a shelterwood harvest; as a result, regeneration activities are now appropriate. The Northern Region Guide and FSM 2400-R1 Supplement 2400-96-3 state that “where natural catastrophic events such as fire, windstorms, or insect and disease attacks have occurred, 40 acres may be exceeded without 60 day public review and Regional Forester approval, provided that the public is notified in advance and the environmental analysis supports the decision” (FSM 2471.1). The Revised Final EIS served as notice to the public that opening size will exceed 40 acres in these two areas.

I have reviewed the silvicultural information in the EIS and Project Files and the site-specific management objectives within the Forest Plan and have determined that even-aged management practices are appropriate (with reserve trees as described in the EIS, page II-29) as the appropriate method to achieve the multiple resource objectives on the sites selected for harvest.

## COMPARISON TO OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

As stated earlier, the criteria for my decision were:

- *the extent to which each alternative addresses the purpose and need for action*
- *how well each alternative responds to environmental issues and concerns identified by the public, other agencies, and Forest Service resource specialists*
- *consistency with the goals and findings of Forest policy and legal mandates*
- *effects of the selected alternative in comparison to other alternatives considered*

The following addresses each of these criteria and provides my rationale for selecting a modified Alternative 4 rather than one of the other alternatives.

### Alternative 1 (No-Action)

I did not select Alternative 1 for implementation because it would not address the purpose and need for action. There would be no recovery of the economic value of damaged timber, no improvement in the vegetative resources, and no reduction in risk of wildfire, as discussed in Attachment D (Other Alternatives Considered, page D-1) and in the EIS (pages III-176 and III-177). Alternative 1 would address concerns identified by those members of the public who do not want timber harvest to occur, but would not respond to the fuels-related concerns of adjacent private landowners.

### Alternative 2

Based on the amount, location, and type of harvest activities proposed, Alternative 2 would best meet the purpose and need for this project. Alternative 2 is the most **environmentally preferable** because it promotes long-term vegetative objectives by re-introducing pines and larch into areas of high mortality from Douglas-fir bark beetle and is more aggressive in fuels reduction treatments that would help to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire. I did not select Alternative 2 for implementation because of ongoing development of new regulations regarding activities within roadless areas, and due to public concerns related to timber harvest within old growth areas. I am still considering how to best address the concerns of landowners who are adjacent to these areas. Alternative 2 would also have resulted in the most impact to wildlife habitat, due to the extent and type of proposed timber harvest activities.

Alternative 2 included 438 acres of ecosystem burning to improve winter forage for big game in Management Area 4 and to re-introduce fire into the ecosystem. The Selected Alternative (Alternative 4) has been modified to include the ecosystem burning proposed and analyzed under Alternative 2.

### **Alternative 3**

I did not select Alternative 3 for implementation because using only the salvage harvest method would not trend affected stands toward long-range goals of restoring more historic stand densities and a species composition that would be more fire-resilient than is currently existing (EIS, page III-63), as described in the purpose and need for this project (ROD, page 1). In addition, implementation of Alternative 3 would not have addressed concerns related to timber harvest within allocated old growth and inventoried roadless area.

### **Conclusion**

I believe as modified, Alternative 4 allows recovery of the economic value of a good portion of the dead and damaged timber, provides a reduction of fuels to lower fire hazard in the areas treated, and promotes long-term vegetative restoration in areas of high timber mortality. By reducing the amount of dead and damaged timber in these treated areas, fire intensities can be reduced to levels that may allow initial attack forces to control a fire before it brings about significant change to the landscape. It is important that this timber be removed as quickly as possible to provide for the greatest opportunity for long-term restoration within the affected areas and for economic benefits to local communities.

The timber harvest will contribute to the continuing operation of local mills, directly and indirectly enhancing the local and state economy through employment and tax revenues. Alternative 4 will result in a net value of approximately \$147,000 (anticipated income from the timber minus the costs of activities, sale preparation and administration), with approximately \$124,000 going directly to Kootenai and Shoshone counties (discussed on pages III-86 through III-88 of the EIS).

Selection of Alternative 4 will address concerns of people who do not want timber harvest to occur within allocated old growth and roadless areas, but does not address the concerns of adjacent private landowners because there will be no reduction of fuel levels and associated fire risk in the old-growth stands adjacent to their property. It will not meet the desires of those people who oppose any level of timber harvest, because an estimated 1,160 acres of timber harvest will occur in order to meet the objectives stated on page 1 of this document.

However, implementation of Alternative 4 does accomplish approximately 81% of the timber harvest and fuels reduction activities considered under the proposed action, while maintaining options for management of the old-growth stands and roadless areas. We recognize that approximately 273 total acres in six analysis areas adjacent to private ownership are still in need of activities to reduce the level of fuels. Except for the ecosystem burning that will occur in the East Rutherford area, the fuel levels in these six analysis areas (Hayden, Canfield, Fernan, Blue Creek, East Rutherford and Thompson) will not be addressed under this decision.

### **DOCUMENTS AND PROJECT FILES**

This Record of Decision summarizes some of the analyses that have led to this point in the process. More reports and analyses documentation have been referenced or developed during the course of this project and are part of the Project Files. All project files for the Small Sales EIS project are available for review by the public. Please contact the NEPA Coordinator at the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District (Fernan Office), (208) 664-2318, to review the files.

## APPEAL RIGHTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

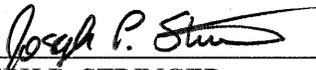
This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. A written Notice of Appeal must be submitted within 45 days after the date of notice of this decision is published in the Spokesman-Review newspaper. The Notice of Appeal must be sent to the Appeal Deciding Officer (Regional Forester): **USDA Forest Service, Region 1, Attn: Appeals Deciding Officer (RFO), P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807.**

It is the appellant's responsibility to provide sufficient written evidence and rationale to show why my decision should be remanded or reversed. An appeal submitted to the Appeal Deciding Officer becomes a part of the appeal record. An appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. As a minimum, the Notice of Appeal must include:

- ✓ *a statement that your document is an appeal filed according to 36 CFR part 215*
- ✓ *your name, address and, if possible, telephone number*
- ✓ *the decision being appealed by title and subject, date of decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official*
- ✓ *the specific changes you want to see in the decision or the portion of the decision to which you object*
- ✓ *a statement of how my decision fails to consider comments previously provided either before or during the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6 and, if applicable, how you believe the decision violates law, regulation, or policy*

Your appeal will be dismissed if the preceding information is not included in the Notice of Appeal. If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur five business days from the close of the 45-day appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition.

I am the Responsible Official for this decision. For more information regarding the project, contact Project Team Leader Bob Rehnberg at the Fernan Office of the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, (208) 664-2318.



JOSEPH P. STRINGER  
District Ranger  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District

5-23-01

Date

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**ATTACHMENT A  
DETAILED FEATURES OF THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE**

**Features Designed to Protect Aquatic Resources**

In development of the action alternatives, standards and guidelines of the Inland Native Fish Strategy were used specifically to protect water and aquatic biota within the Resource Area (EIS, pages II-17 and II-28). Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA's), known locations of sensitive plants and special wildlife habitat areas were excluded from proposed timber harvest or fuel treatment activities. Standard widths for defining interim Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA's) were utilized with no modifications (there are no Category 3 streams or water bodies identified within the Coeur d'Alene River Basin). Riparian Management Objectives and road management standards and guidelines were applied within the Resource Area boundary on those roads used for harvesting or hauling of timber. Roads that will be closed to maintain big-game security goals will comply with the Inland Native Fish Strategy prior to closure. Streamside buffers will be applied along all harvest units. The intent of the buffers are to meet the riparian management objectives of maintaining slope stability in potentially sensitive areas, maintain stream temperatures and provide a long-term supply of large woody debris. Under the Inland Native Fish Strategy the stream channel buffer widths are as follows:

- **Category 1 - Fish-bearing Streams:** Interim RHCA's consist of the stream and the area on either side of the stream extending from the edges of the active stream channel to the top of the inner gorge, or to the outer edges of the 100-year floodplain, or to the outer edges of riparian vegetation, or to a distance equal to the height of two site-potential trees, or 300 feet slope distance (600 feet total, including both sides of the stream channel), whichever is greatest.
- **Category 2 - Permanently flowing non-fish bearing streams:** Interim RHCA's consist of the stream and the area on either side of the stream extending from the edges of the active stream channel to the top of the inner gorge, or to the outer edges of the 100-year floodplain, or to the outer edges of riparian vegetation, or to a distance equal to the height of one site-potential tree, or 150 feet slope distance (300 feet total, including both sides of the stream channel), whichever is greatest.
- **Category 3 – Ponds, lakes, reservoirs and wetlands greater than 1 acre:** Interim RHCA's consist of the body of water or wetland and the area to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation, or to the extent of the seasonally saturated soil, or to the extent of moderately and highly unstable areas, or to a distance equal to the height of one site-potential tree, or 150 feet slope distance from the edge of the maximum pool elevation of constructed ponds and reservoirs or from the edge of the wetland, pond or lake, whichever is greatest. There are no Category 3 water bodies identified on National Forest System lands within the Coeur d'Alene River Basin.
- **Category 4 - Seasonally flowing or intermittent streams, wetlands less than 1 acre, landslides, and landslide-prone areas:** This category includes features with high variability in size and site-specific characteristics. At a minimum the interim RHCA's must include:
  - *The extent of landslides and landslide-prone areas*
  - *The intermittent stream channel and the area to the top of the inner gorge*
  - *The intermittent stream channel or wetland and the area to the outer edges of the riparian vegetation*

- *For Priority Watersheds, the area from the edges of the stream channel, wetland, landslide or landslide-prone area to a distance equal to the height of one site-potential tree, or 100 feet slope distance, whichever is greatest*
- *For watersheds not identified as Priority Watersheds, the area from the edges of the stream channel, wetland, landslide or landslide-prone area to a distance equal to the height of one-half site potential tree, or 50 feet slope distance, whichever is greatest*

No harvest will occur within stream buffers identified under the Inland Native Fish Strategy. Temporary road locations are along ridgelines with no stream channel crossings. Temporary roads will be waterbarred, seeded and closed to make them hydrologically inert. Two stream channel crossings will be restored on the unclassified system road to be closed in the Little Tepee analysis area. This will result in a net reduction of one road mile. Instream work can cause increased sedimentation (fines) while the work is being conducted. Instream work will be avoided prior to July 15 each year to reduce impacts to eggs and fry.

To minimize erosion and ensure compliance with State water quality standards, all road construction and timber harvest associated with the Small Sales project will be completed using Best Management Practices. The Forest Service Handbook 2509.22 (Soil and Water Conservation Handbook) outlines Best Management Practices that meet the intent of the water quality protection elements of the Idaho Forest Practices Act. Activities will meet or exceed rules and regulations of the Idaho Forest Practices Act, Best Management Practices, and the Idaho Forestry Act and Fire Hazard Reduction Laws (1988).

### **Features Related to Vegetation Management**

Within 5 years of regeneration harvest, site preparation for regeneration, fuel treatment and planting will occur. In approximately 10 to 30 years the stands identified for regeneration may be entered for pre-commercial thinning, pruning, cleaning and possibly fertilization to meet target stand and management area guidelines. Proximity access for stand-tending purposes will be maintained to all regeneration units, including past regeneration harvest areas in which early seral species, particularly white pine, have been planted. Precommercial thinning and pruning has been shown to decrease mortality due to white pine blister rust in non-resistant stock (Schwant, Marsden, McDonald, 1994) and are important tools in managing for this species (EIS, page II-28).

### **Features Designed to Protect Rare Plants**

All highly suitable habitat will be field surveyed prior to implementation of the Selected Alternative. No harvest activity will occur which will adversely impact any known rare plant population. All populations potentially adversely affected will be buffered from harvest activity by a minimum of 100 feet. No harvest activity will occur in riparian habitat.

All newly identified threatened and sensitive plant occurrences will be evaluated. Specific protection measures will be implemented to minimize impacts to that population occurrence and its habitat.

### **Features Designed to Protect Air Quality**

The Idaho Panhandle National Forest is a party to the North Idaho Smoke Management Memorandum of Agreement, which established procedures regulating the amount of smoke produced from prescribed fire. The North Idaho group currently uses the services and procedures of the Montana State Airshed Group. The procedures used by the Montana Group are considered to be the “best available control technology” by the Montana Air Quality Bureau for major open burning in Montana. A Missoula-based monitoring unit is responsible for coordinating prescribed burning in North Idaho during the months of April through

November. This unit monitors meteorological data, air quality data, and planned prescribed burning and decides daily on whether or not restrictions on burning are necessary the following day.

In practice, a list of all prescribed burning planned for the burning season on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District is forwarded to the monitoring unit through the Idaho Panhandle National Forest fire desk before March 1. Daily, by 8:30 a.m., the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District informs the fire desk of all burning planned for the next day and the fire desk forwards this information to the monitoring unit. By 3:00 p.m. the same day the monitoring unit informs the Forest if any restrictions are to be in effect the following day, and the fire desk informs the District. These procedures limit smoke accumulations to legal, acceptable limits.

Historically, prescribed burning on the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District occurs in the spring and fall seasons over a total time span of 45 to 60 days during each season. All burning complies with federal, state and local regulations. Management practices include, but are not limited to, burning under spring-like conditions (high moisture content in fuels, soil and duff) to reduce emissions, provide for retention of large woody debris, and to protect the soil. Prescribed burning during spring or fall will generate less smoke than a much hotter stand replacing summertime wildfire.

### **Features Designed to Protect Wildlife Habitat**

Leave trees in regeneration and rehabilitation areas will be reserved from harvest to provide size class diversity and long-term snag recruitment. Forest Plan snag guidelines will be met. In harvest units, 2 to 5 of the largest dead trees will be retained.

In all harvest units, some down logs will be retained to protect long-term site productivity and maintain soil organic matter. On moist sites, 15 to 20 logs per acre will be retained on the site. On dry sites, 3 to 6 logs per acre will be retained. These logs will be at least 12 inches in diameter and six feet long.

To reduce effects to ground-nesting birds, timing restrictions will be implemented during burning activities to maintain potential nest sites in suitable habitat.

If active flammulated owl nest sites are found, the Forest Service may cancel timber harvest and road construction activities within 200 feet of the nest site. If active goshawk nest sites are found, the nest site will be protected with a 30-acre no-harvest buffer. No tree felling, skidding, road construction or other potentially disturbing activities will occur within approximately one-quarter mile of the nest site from March 15 to August 15. These features will be incorporated into timber sale packages using Timber Sale Contract clause C6.251.

The following currently open roads will be closed with earth barriers by the purchaser to improve wildlife security: Roads 259A, 259C, 259H, 3010A and 1521-UD.

The purchaser will install gates on Roads 259D and 1516 to meet direction of the new Travel Plan. The earth barrier on Road 3010 will be replaced with a gate to allow for summer access, in compliance with the Travel Plan. Roads 3010G and 3010F will be closed with earth barriers. The purchaser will close all new temporary roads with earth barriers after use is complete, with the exception of the road accessing Unit 8 in the Potosi project area, which will be closed using KV-funds in order to allow completion of post-sale activities.

An earth barrier will be used to close Roads 259E and 259G (which are currently open) after post-sale activities are complete. A front-end obliteration will be implemented on Road 1569B (currently gated) after post-sale activities to provide additional security for suitable fisher habitat in the Downey project area.

Gates will be installed on currently barriered roads that will be opened for sale-related activities for more than a month. Existing and newly installed gates will be closed at the end of each day’s activities.

**Features Designed to Protect Heritage Resources**

All known heritage resource sites will be protected as directed by the Cultural Resources Management Practices (Forest Plan, Appendix FF). Any future discovery of heritage resource sites or caves will be inventoried and protected if found to be of cultural significance. A decision will be made to avoid, protect, or mitigate effects to these sites in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

**Mitigation**

The following mitigation measures are an integral facet of the Selected Alternative and have been identified as necessary to reduce environmental effects to natural resources as a result of implementing proposed activities. These measures will be incorporated into the project design, timber sale contract, and other contracts and project plans.

**Rare (TES) Plants:** Field surveys will be conducted on all highly suitable habitats within activity areas prior to project implementation. The table below displays the approximate number of acres that must be surveyed prior to project implementation within activity areas (including areas where timber harvest, road construction, and road obliteration will occur).

**Table A-1. Acres of land and miles of road\* to be surveyed for TES plants under the Selected Alternative.**

Habitat Guild	Acres of Land	Miles of Road
Wet forest guild	0	0
Moist forest guild	256	0.28
Dry forest guild	177	0
Deciduous riparian guild	0	0
Peatland guild	0	0
Subalpine guild	0	0
Total	433	0.28

\* Miles of road to be surveyed represent entire road segments within suitable habitat. Actual road miles surveyed will be less than those displayed.

If populations are found they will have specific mitigation measures designed by the project botanist to ensure that activities are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species. Mitigation measures could include dropping units or other ground-disturbing activities, buffering populations or habitat, or changing management prescriptions for fuel treatment or timber harvest. If necessary, Timber Sale Contract provisions C(T)6.251 (Protection of Endangered Species) and C(T)9.52 (Settlement for Environmental Cancellation) will be implemented. These measures are estimated to be highly effective. The requirement to survey, identify and protect populations from adverse effects and to buffer habitat for Threatened species from all activities will be implemented prior to the award of the contract. The maintenance of any buffers protecting populations will be administered in the contract.

Measures will be taken in the project area to reduce the spread of weeds which could invade the vulnerable dry grassland habitats preferred by Spalding’s catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*). Contract provisions will be used to treat identified existing infestations within the project area. Known sites and priorities for treatment were established in the Coeur d’Alene River Ranger District Noxious Weed Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Contract Clause CT6.343 (Noxious Weed

Control) or its equivalent will be used to require cleaning of all road construction or maintenance equipment prior to entry onto National Forest System lands. All reconstructed roads or other areas of ground disturbance associated with road work will be seeded with a weed-free native and desired non-native seed mix and fertilized as necessary as soon after the site disturbance as is practical. Seeding of log landings and skid roads will be done with higher seed densities than normally required, to provide erosion control. This will help to ensure establishment of desirable vegetation and has proven effective in reducing or preventing establishment of noxious weeds.

## **Monitoring**

**Forest Plan Monitoring:** The Forest Plan documents a system to monitor and evaluate Forest activities. Monitoring and evaluation each have distinctly different purposes and scope. In general, monitoring is designed to gather the data necessary for project evaluation. During evaluation of project effectiveness, data provided through the monitoring effort are analyzed and interpreted. This process will provide periodic data necessary to determine if implementation is within the bounds of the project design (Forest Plan, page IV-7). For activities related to the Small Sales project, the Selected Alternative will comply with specific monitoring requirements identified by the Forest Plan (Forest Plan, Chapter IV). The length of time that monitoring is needed will be determined by the results and evaluation of what is being monitored. When it is certain that regulations and standards are being met, monitoring of a particular element will cease. If monitoring evaluations show that regulations or standards are not being achieved at the desired level, management intervention will occur.

**Forest Corporate Monitoring:** In December 1999, the Ecosystem Team for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests facilitated development of a Corporate Monitoring System. The emphasis is on monitoring our progress in restoring the ecosystems of the Idaho Panhandle and in being more consistent in the way we analyze effects to the ecosystems. The monitoring is tied closely to findings of the Interior Columbia Basin and Geographic Assessment. The data that will be tracked for long-term monitoring and a discussion of changes to the core data elements is provided in Attachment C. Further information regarding corporate monitoring is provided in the Project Files (“Monitoring”).

**Monitoring Specific to This Project:** In addition to the above monitoring, all regeneration and rehabilitation units will be monitored for regeneration success. All regeneration will be complete in 5 years to meet the NFMA requirements. All intermediate treatments will be monitored to assess achievement of prescription objectives.

**ATTACHMENT B  
SPECIFIC UNIT INFORMATION**

**Table B-1. Specific Unit Information Under the Selected Alternative.**

Area Name	Unit #	Yarding Method	Fuel Treatment	Harvest Prescription	Approximate Acres
Callis	1	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	64.3
Callis	2	Tractor	Grapple pile	Salvage	4.1
Callis	3	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	57.0
Callis	4	Tractor	Grapple pile	Salvage	3.2
Callis	5	Tractor	Grapple pile	Salvage	4.6
Callis	6	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	22.2
Callis	7	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	29.3
Callis	8	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	12.8
Callis	9	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	28.9
Callis	10	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	21.1
Callis	11	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	3.6
Callis	12	Tractor	Grapple pile	Salvage	15.8
Callis	13	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	14.1
Callis	14	Tractor	Grapple pile	Salvage	7.5
Callis	15	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	8.2
Callis	16	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	2.7
Callis	17	Skyline	Jackpot	Salvage	12.8
Cataldo	27	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.0
Cataldo	28	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	1.7
Cataldo	29	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.5
Cataldo	30	Cable	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.7
Cataldo	31	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	2.1
Cataldo	32	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.0
Cataldo	33	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	2.3
Cataldo	34	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.5
Cataldo	35	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.3
Cataldo	36	Helicopter	Underburn	Regeneration	6.1
Cataldo	37	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.6
Cataldo	38	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	12.3
Cataldo	39	Tractor	Jackpot	Salvage	0.5
Cataldo	40	Tractor	Jackpot	Salvage	0.6
Cataldo	41	Cable	Jackpot	Salvage	1.1
Cataldo	42	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	6.6
Cataldo	43	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.6
Cedar	1	Helicopter	Underburn	Regeneration	4.9
Cedar	2	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.2
Cedar	3	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	2.2
Cedar	4	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	3.0
Cedar	5	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	1.8
Cedar	6	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	2.5
Cedar	7	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.1
Cedar	8	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.1
Cedar	9	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.6
Cedar	10	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.6
Cougar	2	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.9
Cougar	3	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	9.9

*Small Sales EIS - Record of Decision - Attachment B*

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Unit #</b>	<b>Yarding Method</b>	<b>Fuel Treatment</b>	<b>Harvest Prescription</b>	<b>Approximate Acres</b>
Cougar	4	Cable	Jackpot	Salvage	5.6
Cougar	7	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	11.0
Cougar	8	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	1.4
Cougar	9	cable	Top attach	Salvage	3.3
Downey	1	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	15.0
Downey	2	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.0
Fourth of July	1	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.3
Fourth of July	2	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.0
Fourth of July	3	Tractor	Jackpot	Improvement	3.8
Fourth of July	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.7
Fourth of July	5	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Improvement	1.5
Fourth of July	6	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.6
Fourth of July	7	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.1
Fourth of July	8	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.1
Fourth of July	9	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.5
Fourth of July	10	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.8
Fourth of July	11	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	2.9
Fourth of July	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	1.9
Fourth of July	13	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	10.2
Fourth of July	14	Helicopter	Underburn	Regeneration	4.3
Fourth of July	15	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.6
Fourth of July	16	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.9
Fourth of July	17	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.5
Fourth of July	18	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.7
Fourth of July	19	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.0
Fourth of July	20	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.3
Fourth of July	22	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.8
Fourth of July	23	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.6
Fourth of July	24	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.7
Fourth of July	25	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	1.6
Fourth of July	26	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	3.2
Fourth of July	44	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.9
Fourth of July	45	Helicopter	Hand pile	Salvage	2.2
Fourth of July	46	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.1
Fourth of July	47	Horse	Hand pile	Salvage	4.7
Fourth of July	48	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	0.8
Fourth of July	49	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	0.9
Fourth of July	50	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Improvement	3.4
Gimlet	1	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.6
Gimlet	2	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.9
Gimlet	3	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0
Gimlet	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0
Gimlet	5	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.6
Gimlet	6	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.1
Gimlet	7	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.1
Gimlet	8	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.8
Gimlet	9	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.8
Gimlet	10	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.5
Gimlet	11	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.1
Gimlet	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	6.1
Gimlet	13	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.4
Gimlet	14	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.7
Gimlet	15	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Unit #</b>	<b>Yarding Method</b>	<b>Fuel Treatment</b>	<b>Harvest Prescription</b>	<b>Approximate Acres</b>
Gimlet	16	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0
Gimlet	17	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.8
Gimlet	18	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.7
Gimlet	19	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.0
Gimlet	20	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0
Gimlet	21	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.3
Little Tepee	1	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	4.5
Little Tepee	2	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	9.1
Little Tepee	3	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	10.6
Little Tepee	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	6.8
Little Tepee	5	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	2.7
Little Tepee	6	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	4.7
Little Tepee	7	Helicopter	Top Attach	Improvement	3.5
Little Tepee	8	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	3.9
Little Tepee	9	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.9
Little Tepee	10	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.3
Little Tepee	11	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.7
Little Tepee	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.0
Little Tepee	13	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.2
Little Tepee	14	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	2.8
Little Tepee	15	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.1
Little Tepee	16	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.8
Little Tepee	17	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.8
Little Tepee	18	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.4
Little Tepee	19	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	1.4
Little Tepee	20	Tractor	Top attach	Thin	4.8
Little Tepee	21	Tractor	Top attach	Thin	3.9
Owl	1	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.2
Owl	2	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.0
Owl	3	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.1
Owl	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.1
Owl	5	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.8
Owl	7	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	7.1
Owl	8	Skyline	Top attach	Improvement	1.0
Owl	9	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.9
Owl	10	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Improvement	0.8
Owl	11	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.5
Owl	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.0
Owl	13	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.7
Owl	14	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.9
Owl	15	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	0.9
Owl	16	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.4
Owl	17	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.1
Owl	18	Skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.5
Owl	19	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	0.9
Owl	20	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	2.6
Owl	21	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.6
Owl	22	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	0.5
Owl	23	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.8
Owl	24	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	2.7
Owl	25	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	3.0
Owl	26	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	2.3
Owl	27	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	8.1

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Unit #</b>	<b>Yarding Method</b>	<b>Fuel Treatment</b>	<b>Harvest Prescription</b>	<b>Approximate Acres</b>
Owl	28	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	1.0
Owl	29	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.3
Owl	30	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	0.9
Owl	31	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.0
Owl	32	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.3
Owl	33	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.4
Owl	34	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	6.8
Owl	35	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	1.5
Potosi	1	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	10.7
Potosi	2	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	3.4
Potosi	3	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.0
Potosi	4	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	8.8
Potosi	5	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	5.2
Potosi	6	Helicopter	Jackpot	Salvage	2.1
Potosi	7	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.3
Potosi	8	Cable	Underburn	Regeneration	7.2
Potosi	9	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	6.8
Potosi	10	Tractor	Jackpot	Salvage	4.1
Potosi	11	Cable	Jackpot	Improvement	6.0
Potosi	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Thin	3.9
Potosi	13	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.0
Potosi	14	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Thin	2.0
Potosi	15	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.6
Potosi	16	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	5.3
Potosi	17	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	3.7
Potosi	18	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.0
Potosi	18	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.1
Potosi	19	Skyline	Underburn	Thin	7.9
Potosi	20	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	2.4
Potosi	21	skyline	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.2
Potosi	22	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.1
Potosi	23	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.1
Potosi	24	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.4
Potosi	24	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.7
Potosi	25	Cable	Jackpot	Improvement	0.6
Potosi	25	Cable	Jackpot	Improvement	3.9
Potosi	26	Cable	Jackpot	Salvage	2.3
Potosi	27	Cable	Lop & scatter	Thin	3.2
Potosi	28	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	6.2
Potosi	29	Cable	Lop & scatter	Thin	4.0
Potosi	30	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	2.4
Potosi	31	Cable	Lop & scatter	Thin	1.5
Potosi	32	Horse	Hank pile	Salvage	2.7
Prado	1	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	1.0
Prado	2	Tractor	Top attach	Improvement	5.9
Prado	3	Tractor	Top attach	Improvement	3.9
Prado	4	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Improvement	2.7
Prado	5	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.2
Prado	6	Tractor	Lop & scatter	Improvement	2.2
Prichard	1	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	2.7
Prichard	2	Skyline	Top attach	Regeneration	3.9
Prichard	3	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	4.2
Prichard	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.4

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Unit #</b>	<b>Yarding Method</b>	<b>Fuel Treatment</b>	<b>Harvest Prescription</b>	<b>Approximate Acres</b>
Prichard	5	Helicopter	Underburn	Regeneration	7.3
Prichard	6	Skyline	Top attach	Regeneration	6.4
Prichard	7	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	2.6
Prichard	8	Skyline	Top attach	Regeneration	4.4
Prichard	9	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	3.2
Prichard	10	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.3
Prichard	11	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.9
Prichard	12	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.0
Prichard	13	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	8.1
Prichard	14	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.0
Prichard	15	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	3.6
Prichard	16	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	1.8
Prichard	17	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	11.8
Prichard	18	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	7.5
Prichard	19	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.2
Prichard	20	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Improvement	4.2
Prichard	21	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	4.7
Prichard	22	Helicopter	Jackpot	Improvement	7.3
Prichard	23	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	6.8
Prichard	24	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	4.1
Shoshone	1	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	7.0
Shoshone	2	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Thin	1.9
Shoshone	3	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	6.6
Shoshone	4	Helicopter	Lop & scatter	Salvage	10.2
Shoshone	5	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	5.3
Shoshone	6	Skyline	Underburn	Regeneration	3.8
Shoshone	7	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	6.0
Studer	10	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	3.0
Studer	11	Tractor	Top attach	Salvage	4.3
White	1	Cable	Jackpot	Salvage	8.3
White	2	Cable	Jackpot	Salvage	1.9
White	3	Cable	Underburn	Regeneration	6.7
White	4	Cable	Top attach	Salvage	9.2
White	5	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	6.3
White	6	Skyline	Top attach	Salvage	5.3
White	7	Cable	Lop & scatter	Salvage	82.1

**ATTACHMENT C  
CORPORATE MONITORING INFORMATION**

**Long-term Monitoring of Ecosystem Core Data**

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests are currently implementing a process to monitor changes to a number of ecosystem conditions resulting from project activities and natural disturbances. The overall focus of this monitoring is to evaluate changes in ecosystem condition (structure, composition, and function). The following ecosystem conditions (Core Data Monitoring Elements) have currently been selected for long-term monitoring: hydrologic integrity, wildlife security and public access, water yield, changes in forest structure outside the Historic Range of Variability (HRV), changes in species composition outside HRV, habitat loss and species decline, and changes in landscape pattern. The analysis for each project considers project-related changes to these conditions and anticipated changes are described in project environmental analysis documentation. Table C-1 displays the anticipated project related changes to these conditions.

**Table C-1. Anticipated project related changes to ecosystem conditions.**

<b>Ecosystem condition</b>	<b>Core data to be Monitored</b>	<b>Project-related changes</b>
Hydrologic integrity	Road density	Under the Selected Alternative, 6 short segments of temporary road (totaling 0.8 miles), located high on the slope. With the decommissioning of 1 mile of road in the Little Tepee drainage there is virtually no net change in total road density.
Wildlife security and public access	Open road density	There will be a net reduction in open road density with the closure of Roads 259A, 259C, 259D, 259G, 259H, 1569B and 3010A. All temporary roads will be closed after use.
Water yield	Hydrologic openings (equivalent clearcut acres)	Mortality cause by the bark beetles created the openings. Canopy reduction associated with the harvest of green trees is minor. There is only a minor change in equivalent clearcut acres from what would occur if no action were taken.
Changes in forest structure outside HRV	Forest structure by size and age class groups	Timber harvest is primarily to salvage bark beetle mortality by removing dead trees and logs. Loss of forest structure under this proposal is very similar to that caused by the bark beetle outbreak. Since a bark beetle outbreak is a naturally occurring phenomenon, this proposal stays within the range of historic variability.
Changes in species composition outside HRV	Forest composition by forest cover type group	Implementation of the Selected Alternative will actually hasten the return to the historic range of variability beyond what would occur under the No-Action Alternative by returning pines and larch into the ecosystem in areas of high mortality as opposed to letting the areas regenerate back to fir.
Habitat loss and species decline	TES dry and moist/cold site habitat restoration	This project will promote health of dry-site habitats with improvement harvests in stands containing Ponderosa pine by daylighting the existing large pine component. There is no entry into moist/cold site habitat.
Changes in landscape pattern	Landscape pattern indicators (mean patch size and variability, edge density, etc.)	Changes in the landscape pattern created by the proposal follows the landscape pattern of mortality that naturally occurred as a result of a bark beetle outbreak. Patches and resulting harvest units are generally small and scattered across the landscape.

## **ATTACHMENT D OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

### **Other Alternatives Considered in Detail**

In addition to Alternative 4, three other alternatives were considered in detail for this project (EIS, “Alternative Descriptions,” pages II-23 through II-26). The following provides a description of each and the rationale for not selecting these alternatives.

#### ***Alternative 1 (No Action)***

The No-Action Alternative is required by NEPA and NFMA. Under this alternative, none of the proposed activities would occur at this time. There would be no change from current management direction or from the level of management intensity in the area. Implementation of the ongoing and foreseeable activities identified in Chapter II of the EIS would still occur.

Alternative 1 would incur an estimated \$150,000 in planning and analyses costs, with no revenues generated from the sale of timber (EIS, pages II-35 and III-88).

It is estimated that approximately 7,200 acres of National Forest System lands within the Small Sales EIS project area have incurred some mortality due to the current bark beetle epidemic (EIS, page III-61). Most of this mortality will have little impact on stand structure, but about 134 acres are projected to have a substantial loss of forest tree cover (greater than 50 percent of the stand basal area) due to the beetles, ice storm damage, or root disease. Some ponderosa pine and western larch stands may incur temporary benefits due to the mortality of Douglas-fir and resulting reduced competition. However, in the absence of further disturbance, these benefits would be expected to be lost as shade-tolerant species regenerate and again dominate the stands (EIS, page III-61).

Under the No-Action Alternative, the prolonged buildup of fuel may lead to fires more catastrophic and destructive to the site than typically occurred in the native forest (EIS, page II-34). The combination of more fine fuels such as grasses and shrubs regenerating in openings, new understory trees serving as ladder fuels, and continuing accumulation of heavy fuels from down logs and snags all contribute to changes in fuels and towards more severe fire behavior, which in turn threaten future fire control, increase the danger to firefighters, and place neighboring forest ecosystems and private property at risk. The fuel conditions that enable a fast moving wildfire of higher than normal intensity could persist for several decades.

The No-Action Alternative would not meet any of the specific objectives identified for this project area by the Forest Plan and Geographic Assessment.

#### ***Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)***

From a vegetation standpoint, the objective of Alternative 2 was to harvest dead and dying trees in areas attacked by bark beetles or that sustained ice and snow damage in 1996/97, and to restore long-lived seral tree species such as white pine, western larch and Ponderosa pine in stands where a substantial portion of the basal area of the stand has been killed. In some stands, growth and vigor of existing Ponderosa pine and larch would be enhanced through improvement cutting or thinning to reduce competition.

Of the total 448 acres of allocated old growth in the Hayden Lake, Canfield Face, Fernan Creek, Blue Creek and Thompson Creek analysis areas, harvest would occur on a total of 159 acres. Approximately 511 acres of replacement old growth was proposed in the Cedar, Fortier and Stella Creek drainages (EIS, page D-7). Because the Forest Plan standard for retaining 5 percent existing old growth in an Old Growth Unit (page II-

29) could not be met with this alternative, a site-specific amendment to revise this standard of the Forest Plan would have been needed to implement this alternative.

Most stands would have been treated by salvage of trees killed by bark beetles (this includes trees that are attacked by beetles) and associated trees killed by root disease, other pathogens or ice and snow damage. Douglas-fir and western larch with heavy dwarf mistletoe infestations would also have been removed from stands with beetle mortality. Incidental green trees could have been removed from skyline corridors or skid trails, or for safety reasons.

Ecosystem burning would have occurred on a total of approximately 438 acres to improve winter forage for big game in Management Area 4, and to re-introduce fire into the ecosystem. This could have also provided some sites for natural regeneration of early seral species, particularly ponderosa pine and western large. The ecosystem burning would likely have decreased the risk of stand-replacing fires, because accumulated woody debris and understory vegetation would have been reduced.

A portion of one of the analysis areas (East Rutherford) is located within the Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area. Approximately 52 acres of timber harvest and fuels treatment would have occurred within the roadless area boundary. An estimated 225 acres of the ecosystem burning would have occurred within the roadless area to further reduce fuels, improve winter forage for big game, and to re-introduce fire to the ecosystem. There was no road construction or reconstruction proposed within the roadless area.

### ***Alternative 3 (Harvest Dead and Dying Timber Only)***

The objective of this alternative was to harvest only dead and dying trees in areas with mortality caused by Douglas-fir beetles or where there is substantial ice and snow damage (approximately 1,433 acres). No additional green trees would be harvested to create suitable conditions for planting.

Of the total 448 acres of allocated old growth in the Hayden Lake, Canfield Face, Fernan Creek, Blue Creek and Thompson Creek analysis areas, harvest would have occurred on a total of 159 acres. Approximately 511 acres of replacement old growth was proposed in the Cedar, Fortier and Stella Creek drainages (EIS, page D-7). Because the Forest Plan standard for retaining 5 percent existing old growth in an Old Growth Unit (page II-29) could not be met with this alternative, a site-specific amendment to revise this standard of the Forest Plan would have been needed to implement this alternative. As described for Alternative 2, a portion of one of the analysis areas (East Rutherford) is located within the Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area. The same timber harvest and fuels treatment activities proposed in the roadless area under Alternative 2 would have occurred under Alternative 3.

### **Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Detailed Study**

During project development several proposals were analyzed but dismissed for a variety of reasons (EIS, pages A-9 through A-11). The following section describes the proposals and the reasons they were dismissed from further analysis.

**Salvage all of the beetle-killed and infested timber:** This alternative was dismissed as not economically feasible or desirable from a resource standpoint. Field reconnaissance identified areas of timber mortality concentrations that were thought to be economically feasible to remove given the full range of yarding system options including helicopter. Very small or isolated patches of timber mortality were often dismissed during reconnaissance as not being economically feasible. Harvest of mortality within riparian areas was dismissed during reconnaissance because the trees carry more value as potential recruitment for stream channel stability.

During reconnaissance, areas where historic regeneration harvest created overall low snag habitat were not considered for salvage harvest. Venus Creek is an example of this situation. Concentrations of timber mortality in stands being managed for old growth habitat were not considered for entry unless they were adjacent to private ownership. There are many patches of old growth habitat with concentrations of beetle mortality scattered across the district. This dead component in old growth habitat is recognized for its value in overall old growth quality. Only when this occurred adjacent to private ownership, with stronger concerns for fire hazard levels, was entry proposed.

**Conventional harvest equipment only:** Use of conventional yarding equipment (ground and line machines) generally results in a better financial return on timber proposed for harvest and results in better access for fuels treatment options. However, due to the scattered pattern of the beetle mortality in many areas, the concern of unacceptable impacts to watershed, wildlife, and fisheries of significant roading, and the time frames needed to design and engineer road systems and costs to build long road segments to access small harvest units, this option was not considered feasible. Temporary roads needed to gain access to conventional units and for fuels treatment were designed to be short, high on the slope, and have minimal impact under all action alternatives. The project as a whole was designed to access concentrations of beetle-killed timber from existing transportation systems with minimal investment, rather than trying to access all of the mortality areas. The use of helicopter actually expands what can be reached in an economical and low impact fashion, although helicopter yarding costs more than ground-based systems.

**No new roads:** There is no permanent road construction proposed under this project. Each action alternative contains six scattered locations for temporary road construction. These six temporary roads result in a total of 0.8 miles of construction. These roads would be short and are located high on the slope associated with ridgelines with no drainage crossings. They are temporary in nature and would be closed to public access after use. Four of the six segments are off of road systems that already have some form of closure device restricting access. Since they are all of such minimal impact to other resources and would not be part of the forest road system increasing maintenance needs the construction of these temporary spurs does not warrant analysis of a separate alternative. None of these temporary spurs are located in roadless or old growth areas.

**Re-install culverts in the Little Tepee Creek drainage to facilitate timber removal:** Many of the roads in the Little Tepee area have been obliterated or had culverts pulled and stream channel crossings restored. This restoration was completed several years ago after the TeBreak and Breakwater timber sales in this area. Consideration was given to reopening Road 209A. This would have allowed for the location of a helicopter landing approximately one-quarter mile south of Little Tepee Unit 1 and would allow for a downhill short flight from the largest cluster of units in that area. This would be the most logical way to access this area for timber salvage. However, use of Road 209A would have required six culvert reinstallations. These installations would have occurred low on the slope in side watersheds that flow directly into the Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River, which is identified as a Water Quality Limited Stream under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. This option was eliminated from further consideration based on anticipated effects to the Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River.

Another option that was considered was to reopen the southern half of Road 1521 that is in the County Creek drainage. This option would have required uphill flights but of a reasonably short distance. This option was eliminated from further consideration because it would have required the re-installation of six drainage crossings within face drainages of the Little North Fork. This route also had deep fills at the crossing locations which would have required significant amounts of dirt to be moved.

A third option was considered that would access the same landing area by coming in from the north end of Road 1521. This would have forced a longer haul but would have re-established 5 drainage crossings up high in the Little Tepee drainage where effects would be less likely to reach the Little North Fork. This option was eliminated from further consideration because watershed concerns would have likely forced the

removal of these crossings from this road; the costs of installing and subsequently removing the 5 crossings for the small amount of timber amount of timber in this area is not economically sound.

**Replace nutrients through fertilization:** One of the fuels reduction methods in harvest operations is to leave tops attached to the top log and remove with the logging operation. Reducing nutrients by yarding tops of trees is a concern in areas of potassium-poor soils associated with Prichard and St. Regis soil types. The primary concern in the urban interface areas is fuels reduction and treatment. These urban interface areas are also locations where maintaining and promoting Ponderosa pine habitat is desirable. Both Alternatives 2 and 4 would “daylight” existing large Ponderosa pine throughout the treatment areas. This involves harvest of understory trees that are growing up into the crowns of the Ponderosa pine and intermediate trees that are crowding the crowns of these large Ponderosa pine. This is especially true in the dryer urban interface areas where more of this habitat exists. Consideration was given to flying the green tops that were created as a result of the daylighting effort so as not to increase fuel loads above existing conditions. Since much of the urban interface county is in Prichard and St. Regis soil types this presented a conflict between fuels reduction and nutrient displacement. Consideration was given to flying the green tops and replacing the lost nutrients with a fertilization treatment. This option was dropped due to poor road access and expense. Most of this urban interface area is scheduled for helicopter yarding and with limited road access it would make it difficult to pack in 50 pound bags of fertilizer to accomplish the recommended 600 pounds per acre treatment need. The cost of fertilizer and the manual labor to spread that amount of fertilizer were considered to be high.

Some thought was given to aerial application of fertilizer using a helicopter but again the costs would be high and it would be difficult to get the fertilizer to exact areas where the nutrients were reduced. It might be hard enough to locate the small, scattered units from the air after salvage much less where the daylighting had occurred. There was also a concern with drift with aerial application. The proposed action modified the fuel treatments throughout the treatment areas to account for Prichard and St. Regis soil types. In areas where the existing fuel loads were felt to be low, lop and scattering of slash on site was used. In higher fuel concentration areas the lop and scattering treatment was followed by a jackpot burn treatment. Within the urban interface, where fuels reduction is the prime consideration, most areas were scheduled for lop and scatter followed by a jackpot burn or hand piling treatment. This additional expense was felt to be similar to a fertilization treatment but also carried the additional benefit of being able to treat existing down fuels in these areas, much of which occurred as a result of ice-storm damage.

**Watershed restoration only:** Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance) stated in his comments that a watershed restoration-only alternative should have been selected as the Proposed Action (EIS, page A-25). The purpose and need for this Small Sales project is to recover the economic value of dead and damaged timber, fuels reduction in areas of timber mortality, and to promote long-term vegetative objectives in areas of timber mortality. The salvage of this timber may provide the funding to finance some additional watershed restoration opportunities that have been identified during project development. To propose a watershed only alternative that did not consider timber salvage would not meet the purpose and need for this project and was therefore dismissed from further consideration.

## **ATTACHMENT E PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **Introduction**

The public was provided 30 days in which to review the Revised Final EIS for the Small Sales Project before I made and issued my decision. During the 30-day review, comments were received from Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance), Kenneth Brooten (adjacent landowner), and Jeff Juel (Ecology Center, Lands Council, and Alliance for the Wild Rockies). A synopsis of their substantive comments and our responses are provided below. Copies of their letters are provided at the end of this Attachment.

### **Comments received from Mike Mihelich (Kootenai Environmental Alliance)**

Mr. Mihelich focuses his comments on the sufficiency of the cumulative effects analysis. He did not identify a preferred alternative.

- A-1. Mr. Mihelich expresses concern that the cumulative effects analysis for the project has not adequately considered past and ongoing timber sales adjacent to proposed harvest units. He points out that the location of past and ongoing timber sales are not identified on the project maps provided with the EIS. “There is no detailed discussion in the Forest Vegetation section or the Watershed section of the Small Sales FEIS [revised] regarding the proposed units being placed adjacent to or near the current logging units in each Project Area, except for the discussion on page 65 of Chapter III.”

*Mr. Mihelich raised this issue in his earlier comments (Revised Final EIS, Appendix A, comment 6(h), page A-24). Analysis area acres reflect the logical boundaries based on vegetation and terrain features, and are large enough to encompass the proposed harvest units. Watershed and wildlife analysis went beyond these project area boundaries to assess cumulative effects. Vegetation, watershed and wildlife analyses are based on the TSMRS and roads databases which are linked to the GIS layer. Acres of clearcut, seed tree and shelterwood harvests are each tracked in the TSMRS database (as reflected in the tables related to Forest Vegetation in Chapters II and III of the Revised Final EIS). The activities proposed under this EIS do not add any negative impacts to the actions of the past, because of their location, the type of trees to be harvested, and the treatment and yarding methods.*

*GIS maps of past harvest treatments tracked in TSMRS are part of the Project Files. The maps show the location of past treatment in relation to proposed units in the project areas.. After publication of the Revised Final EIS, it was determined that data for three past harvest units (totaling 55 acres) in the East Rutherford Project Area was tracked through the TSRMS database, but did not carry over into the GIS mapping layers of the analysis. The impacts of these three units have been assessed and a discussion of effects to vegetation, water resources, and wildlife is provided in the Project Files. Please refer also to the “Corrections” discussion on page 2 of this decision document. No harvest activities will occur in the East Rutherford project area under the Selected Alternative.*

- A-2. “The Small Sales FEIS [revised] did not indicate whether accurate, high quality information regarding locations of recent logging units in each Project Area is incomplete or unavailable. If there is incomplete and/or unavailable accurate, high quality information pertaining to the locations of recent logging units in any or all of the Project Areas, the cumulative effects analysis is incomplete. If there are one or more unavailable NEPA documents that contain fisheries and watershed analysis associated with timber sales that took place after 1980 in one or more of the Project Areas where new logging is

being proposed, the cumulative effects analysis is incomplete, particularly in the areas that have NPF and/or FAR watersheds. If there is accurate, high quality information available regarding the locations of recent logging units for each of the Project Areas, the Small Sales FEIS [revised] did not indicate why this information was not included in the FEIS [revised].”

*There was no incomplete or unavailable information regarding locations of recent logging units in the Project Areas. Mr. Mihelich recently asked to review three Environmental Assessments for timber sales from the early 1980’s. Two of the documents were provided for review; we were unable to locate the third document at the time (it has since been located). The information used in the analysis does not come from the printed copies of old Environmental Assessments. The activities that occur under each NEPA project are tracked through the TSMRS database, which updates the changes in stand age, density, tree size, etc., over time. Therefore, the fact that the requested Environmental Assessment was not immediately available for review does not mean that information related to the sale was not available to project team specialists for analysis.*

*In the past, members of the public have commented that our maps were confusing and difficult to read. Maps that display past and ongoing activities in addition to the proposed activities are usually very detailed. If they are printed at a scale that is economical to copy (for distribution), they become very difficult to read. Therefore, maps displaying this information are provided in the Project Files (Vegetation, Wildlife, Water Resources). Models account for past treatment, and the effects are reflected in the discussions for each respective resource in the Final EIS.*

- A-3. “There were a number of issues besides cumulative effects that were raised in our May 12, 2000 letter and they include: WATBAL/WATSED, Monitoring/Evaluation, the CWA, NFMA, fisheries and road construction/reconstruction. These continue to be significant issues in relation to the Action Alternatives described in the FEIS [revised].”

*These issues were addressed in the (Revised) Final EIS in our response to Mr. Mihelich’s comments (Appendix A, pages A-22 through A-26).*

#### **Comments received from Kenneth Brooten, Jr. (adjacent landowner)**

- B-1. Mr. Brooten is an adjacent landowner. He prefers implementation of Alternative 2 to protect the renewable resources of the forest, including those on his property. “If the infestation is not removed it may well advance into my property in which case the Forest Service will be liable because it is foreseeable that Douglas Fir Bark Beetles migrate onto adjacent lands under the Federal Tort Claims Act.” “If the infestation is not removed there is a dramatic risk of forest fires in the immediate area. Where, as here, the wind blows both up and down the drainage area for Fern Creek, it is foreseeable that any Forest fire will consume my property and that of my brother and sister.” “Failing to act now will destroy the renewable resource. Failing to act now will diminish the productivity of the land as well as fail to protect the quality of the environment not only in the national forests but in the adjoining private lands as well.”

*One of the goals of our proposal was to reduce fuels in areas of timber mortality to lower fire hazard, especially adjacent to private ownership (page 5). All action alternatives would reduce fuels to some extent; Alternative 2 (the proposed action) is the most environmentally preferable because it would promote long-term vegetative objectives by re-introducing pines and larch into areas of high mortality from Douglas-fir bark beetle and is more aggressive in fuels reduction treatments that would help to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire (page 24 of this decision document). I did not select Alternative 2 for implementation because of ongoing development of new regulations regarding*

*activities within roadless areas, and due to public concerns related to timber harvest within old growth areas. Alternative 2 would also have resulted in the most impact to wildlife habitat, due to the extent and type of proposed timber harvest activities.*

*As modified, Alternative 4 (the Selected Alternative) will accomplish approximately 81% of the timber harvest and fuels reduction activities considered under the proposed action, while maintaining options for management of the old-growth stands and roadless areas. I recognize that there are areas adjacent to private ownership that are still in need of activities to reduce the level of fuels.*

**Comments received from Jeff Juel (Ecology Center, Lands Council, Alliance for the Wild Rockies)**

Mr. Juel’s comments relate primarily to the methodology and disclosure process. He does not identify a preferred alternative.

- C-1. “The 30-day comment period on the Small Sales FEIS is not long enough for the public to thoroughly review the proposal. Your April 23 letter to the Ecology Center states that the Final EIS is not substantially different from the draft EIS or supplement. I guess you want the public to take your word on that. In order for one to agree, one must read the entire document of almost 400 pages, and the hundreds of other pages of other documents incorporated by reference.”

*Mr. Juel requested an extension of the 30-day review period in his letter dated April 18, 2001. As stated in our response letter to Mr. Juel, there were no changes to the proposed action, purpose and need, or features of the proposed alternatives. We improved documentation of the cumulative effects analysis and presented the information in an EIS format (rather than the Supplement format used earlier) in order to disclose all of the information in one location. Because of the changed format, we chose to provide the public 30 days in which to review the document prior to issuing a decision, even though a comment period is not required for public review of a Final EIS (40 CFR 1506.10 – Timing of agency action). Changes made between the Draft and Final EIS are clearly identified and summarized on page I-3 of the EIS, and in more detail where changes were made, for example, in the discussion of Reasonably Foreseeable Activities.*

*In addition, I believe the compact disk (CD) format of the Final EIS, such as Mr. Juel received, offers a number of very convenient features that will help expedite reviews. For example, the document is “book marked” so the viewer can easily navigate from one section of the document to another. A “search” feature allows the viewer to find all references to specific topics. The viewer can also “zoom” in on maps and other materials, which make them considerably easier to read. For these reasons, I decided not to extend the review period for the Small Sales Final EIS.*

- C-2. “To date, the Forest Service has not adequately responded to the details raised in our September 25, 2000 appeal of the Small Sales ROD.”

*We responded to Mr. Juel’s appeal issues in our letter of transmittal to the Appeal Reviewing Officer dated October 10, 2000. Mr. Juel was provided a copy of the letter with the Appeal Deciding Officer’s letter. As stated in his letter, the Appeal Deciding Officer remanded the Small Sales Project decision based on inadequate documentation of cumulative effects, which is one of Mr. Juel’s concerns. We revised the Final EIS to improve our documentation of the cumulative effects analysis, based on the concerns identified as appeal issues and on the decision of the Appeal Deciding Officer.*

- C-3. “We also incorporate the Ecology Center’s January 25, 2000 letter to the Forest Supervisor, which the Coeur d’Alene River District Ranger received a copy, within these comments on the FEIS. As our appeal pointed out, the Forest Service has never adequately responded to those issues, either.”

*As stated in the Revised Final EIS (Appendix A, comment 5(t), page A-21), Mr. Juel has made several similar requests to incorporate letters he had written to Forest Supervisor David Wright regarding his desires for management of the National Forest (including his January 25, 2000 letter). The Forest Supervisor has consistently responded that such an approach to public comment is insufficient, and does not meet the requirements for commenting on Forest Service proposals, which requires “specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the person believes the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision” (36 CFR 215.6(b)). Mr. Juel was advised that many of the concerns he raised in his January 25, 2000 letter are more appropriately addressed at the Forest Plan scale or at even a more broad scale (letter to Jeff Juel from Forest Supervisor David Wright dated February 11, 2000). Mr. Juel was asked to respond as specifically as possible to project level proposals.*

- C-4. “We incorporate all Plaintiff’s briefs, declarations, and other supporting documentation in the ongoing litigation on the Douglas-fir Beetle Project (Lands Council et al., v. Vaught) as comments on the Small Sales FEIS. The IPNF has a copy and knows the relevance of each to the issues, facts, and arguments contained therein to this proposed Small Sales project.”

*The lawsuit relates to the Douglas-fir Beetle Project, which was a Forest-level decision and does not address the same harvest locations as this Small Sales EIS. Without any justification provided as to the relevancy of that documentation, incorporation of the information would not appear to meet the requirements for commenting on Forest Service proposals, which requires “specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the person believes the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision” (36 CFR 215.6(b)).*

- C-5. “The IPNF relies upon scientifically unsound modeling to assess sufficiency of snag habitat. Forest Service scientists have recognized the inadequacy of the Thomas, 1979 guidelines upon which IPNF snag standards are based. The IPNF even recognized this in the 1999 Douglas-fir Beetle FEIS, which was cited as Bull et al., 1997 which we further discuss, below. The Small Sales FEIS includes this same research in its list of references, however, the IPNF has not performed the necessary analysis at any planning level to determine the numbers of snags and leave trees that are necessary to maintain viable populations. It is troubling that the IPNF has failed in its duty to update its Forest Plan numerical standards to reflect new scientific information. The courts have found that if the Forest Service fails to provide adequate scientific basis then its actions are arbitrary and capricious.”

*In harvest units, 2 to 5 of the largest dead trees will be left per acre (page A-3 of this decision document). Exact numbers will depend on the number and availability of snags in the surrounding 25 acres, as recommended in the Bull research. The target in the 25-acre area will be 4 to 5 trees per acre, well above the 2 per acre recommended by Thomas. In Bull, 1997, the Thomas model for snags was deemed inadequate since the needs of secondary cavity nesters, like bats and brown creepers, were not taken into account. More recent studies of snag densities cited in Bull, 1997 (including Bate, 1995; Bull and Holthausen, 1993; Evans and Martens, 1995) found approximately 4 snags per acre were needed to support viable populations of snag-dependent species.*

*There are areas (such as Venus Creek) that were hit hard by beetle mortality but where no harvest is proposed due to low snag numbers in the area. Approximately 63,000 acres of beetle-affected stands on the Coeur d’Alene River Ranger District are not being considered for harvest treatment under the*

*Small Sales EIS, nor were they considered under the Douglas-fir Beetle Project. These circumstances, in addition to the ongoing creation of snags caused by widespread root disease mortality across the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, have led to an increase of snags on the district. The snag issue is adequately addressed by the information provided in the Revised Final EIS and this decision document.*

- C-6. “The FEIS does not adequately demonstrate compliance with the newly adopted Roads policy.”

*I have reviewed the Selected Alternative in light of the January 2001 Forest Service Road Management and Transportation System Rule. My decision is in compliance with the direction provided by the rule. No road construction or reconstruction is planned within the inventoried Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area, which is the only inventoried roadless area potentially affected by this proposal (EIS, pages III-232 and 233). I have also reviewed the Selected Alternative in light of the provisions of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which prohibits new road construction and reconstruction and prohibits the cutting, sale and removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands (with specific exceptions). Since no road construction or reconstruction or timber harvest activities are planned within the inventoried Skitwish Ridge Roadless Area, my decision is in compliance with this policy as currently written. For further discussion of transportation planning in relation to this project, please refer to pages 9 and 10 of this decision document, and pages A-7 and A-8 of the Revised Final EIS.*

- C-7. “We believe the FEIS’s incorporation of other documents does not agree with NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1502.21...”

*Mr. Juel does not specify how the incorporation of documents does not agree with NEPA regulations. In his comments on the Draft EIS, he identified concerns related to tiering. “Tiering” refers to the coverage of general matters in broader environmental impact statements with subsequent narrower statements or environmental analyses, incorporating by reference the general discussions and concentrating on the issues specific to the statement being prepared. Agencies are encouraged to tier their environmental impact statements to eliminate repetitive discussions of the same issues and to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review (Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 20, Section 22.31). One example of when tiering is appropriate is from an environmental impact statement on a specific action at an early stage to a supplement or a subsequent statement or analysis (Council on Environmental Quality, 40 CFR 1508.28). Based on that information, it is appropriate for the Small Sales EIS to tier to information already presented in the Douglas-fir Beetle EIS.*

- C-8. “We wonder when the Forest Service would deem it appropriate to consider cumulative effects at the scale of the entire North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River. Flooding occurs in this watershed more frequently than would occur if the basin had not been devastated by so much logging, road building, mining and other developments. The Forest Service is quite aware of the aggradation, the destruction of fish habitat, the high amounts of bedload sediment, and other existing problems with the river. Furthermore, the Forest Service is also aware of several activities ongoing or proposed on national forest and land of other ownership in the Coeur d’Alene River Basin. The Forest Service has never provided an adequate explanation why all such cumulative effects cannot be considered in one EIS.”

*Each of the analysis areas assessed were analyzed on at least two scales: the local site or tributaries where activities occur and the cumulative effect watershed (Revised Final EIS, page III-97). Methodology used to identify the cumulative effects analysis areas for water resources is described*

*in the Revised Final EIS (pages III-97, III-101 through III-104). The cumulative effect watershed is defined as the logical culmination point of water flow where the effects of the distributed project activities could possible integrate or synchronize over time and space and be addressed cumulatively in a larger watershed.*

*The Geographic Assessment appropriately considered the entire Coeur d’Alene River Basin in setting priorities for terrestrial and aquatics restoration. The District is using the recommendations of the Geographic Assessment in identifying areas for consideration of potential restoration. The Iron Honey project is one such proposal; the anticipated Teratoid Tepee project will be another.*

- C-9. “The Forest Service needs an updated programmatic planning process to adjust its guidance following fifteen years of Forest Plan implementation. Much new information exists since the Plan ROD was signed, species have been listed under the ESA, Sensitive species have been identified the Coeur d’Alene River District is operating on an outdated plan. For example, the Forest Plan is written with scant notice of the needs to take action to restore the Forest. The FEIS discloses what it calls “opportunities” to restore the watershed. There are likely hundreds more watershed and ecologically damaging conditions in the area. Still, the Purpose and Need is written so narrowly as to preclude the possibility of actually addressing these problems in a true restoration alternative.”

*The revision of the Forest Plan is underway, but is outside the scope of this Small Sales project since it must occur at the Forest level, not the project level.*

*As stated in the Revised Final EIS, the purpose and need for the Small Sales project does not include watershed restoration (Chapter I, page I-1). The watershed restoration opportunities identified on pages II-20 through II-22 are not mandatory for project implementation, nor guaranteed to be implemented, but may be accomplished if funding becomes available. Opportunities that are listed will be considered for implementation as a result of this project if funding is available. The Small Sales EIS will not produce large volumes of timber in any given area, and will therefore not generate enough funding to accomplish substantial restoration activities. The salvage of timber under this proposal may provide the funding to finance some of the watershed restoration identified as opportunities.*

*The EIS identifies restoration work that has already been completed or is reasonably foreseeable in the vicinity of proposed harvest units. Watershed restoration activities have occurred or are reasonably foreseeable in the following analysis areas (with reference to the Revised Final EIS page where the restoration is identified): Fernan Creek (page III-111), Blue Creek (page III-114), Thompson Creek (page III-117), Wolf Lodge Creek (page III-120), Cedar Creek (page III-123), Fourth of July Creek (page III-127), Prado Creek (page III-133), Cougar Creek (page III-136), Lower Little North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River (page III-139), Beaver Creek (page III-142), Prichard Creek (page III-146), Shoshone Creek (page III-149), Downey Creek (page III-152), and Trail Creek (page III-155).*

- C-10. “Whereas the DEIS stated that logging was proposed for unsuitable acres, the FEIS contradicts that.”

*The Revised Final EIS does not contradict the Draft EIS. In the Revised Final EIS (Appendix A, comment 5-h, page A-17 and A-18), we responded to Mr. Juel’s concern regarding harvest on unsuitable lands: The Forest Plan identified Management Area 9 lands as those areas of non-forest lands, lands not capable of producing industrial products, lands physically unsuited for timber production, and lands capable of timber production but isolated by the above type lands or*

*nonpublic ownership (Forest Plan, page III-39). The goals for these lands are to maintain and protect existing improvements and resource productive potential, and meet visual quality objectives (Forest Plan, page III-39). No scheduled harvest will occur in Management Area 9 lands (Forest Plan, page III-40). Salvage harvest and removal of firewood and miscellaneous products may occur from existing access in these areas. Salvage harvest is defined by the Forest Plan as “The cutting of trees that are dead, dying or deteriorating...before they lose their commercial value as sawtimber,” (Forest Plan, page VI-31).*

*Under the Small Sales EIS, harvest is proposed on lands identified as Management Area 9 in the Canfield Face, Cataldo Face, and Lower Little North Fork analysis areas (pages III-44, III-47, III-48, III-51, III-52, III-54, and III-55). The land identified as Management Area 9 in the Canfield Face analysis area (around Hayden Lake) is physically suitable for timber production and forest regeneration, but was given this designation in order to protect the visual resources near the lake. The proposed harvest in the Canfield Face area would occur on sites suitable for timber production (EIS, page III-44). The Management Area 9 land within the Cataldo Face analysis area does contain large areas unsuitable for timber harvest. Harvest under the proposed action would occur on smaller sites suitable for timber production within the larger areas (EIS, page III-48). Most of the Management Area 9 land within the Lower Little North Fork analysis area is unsuitable for timber production and forest regeneration. About 12 acres of salvage would occur within Management Area 9, but these stands would not be managed for long-term timber production (EIS, page III-48).*

C-11. “When will surveys of proposed activity areas be undertaken for raptors and other wildlife that would be directly harmed by logging activities, and who would do the surveys?”

*Wildlife surveys will occur prior to implementation, and will be conducted under the direction of the District wildlife biologist.*

C-12. “The FEIS is written as to assume that 25% of timber receipts would go to the counties, yet that is not necessarily the case. On October 30, 2000, Public Law 106-393, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 was signed into law.”

*It is likely that timber sale receipts will continue to be used to satisfy the payments under Public Law 106-393. Under this Act, eligible counties have the option of continuing to receive their share of the State’s payments under the 25 Percent Fund Act (15 USC 500), or electing to receive their share of the average of the three highest 25 percent payments to the State during the period of fiscal year 1986 through FY 1999 (the full payment amount). The Act directs the Secretary of the Treasury to pay each State the sum of the amounts elected by the eligible counties in that State. The States then distribute the funds among the eligible counties in accordance with the 25 Percent Fund Act.*

C-13. “The numbers from Table III-23 don’t agree with the numbers from Table III-22.”

*Mr. Juel’s concern is unclear. The two tables display different information. Table III-22 displays costs for each activity by unit of measure, while Table III-23 displays costs for the project as a whole.*

C-14. “The FEIS disclosed inadequate up-to-date information on the conditions of all the streams falling within the watersheds to be protected. On the top of page III-103, the FEIS assumes that the cumulative effect on watersheds is correlated only with the amount of acres logged. We don’t believe that is a reasonable assumption and in fact, that is contradicted by other statements in the analysis.”

*The statement on page III-103 is not intended to imply that timber harvest is the only consideration in the cumulative effects analysis. Modeling is based on the amount of acres logged, the amount of roading, and the landtypes present. The paragraph cited refers to the fact that the actual harvest implemented on the ground was substantially less than planned under the Douglas-fir Beetle FEIS. The amount of harvest that will occur under the Small Sales Revised Final EIS, combined with the actual harvest under the Douglas-fir Beetle Project, is still less than the harvest analyzed under the Douglas-fir Beetle FEIS. As a result, the cumulative effects of harvest proposed under the Small Sales Revised Final EIS will fall within the scope of the original Douglas-fir Beetle EIS project.*

C-15. “In a letter to the US fish and Wildlife Service dated June 19, 1998, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management revised their earlier Biological Assessment (BA) which made a determination of effects on bull trout as a result of the implementation of their Land and Resource Management Plans (as amended by INFISH and PACFISH). Attached to that June 19 letter were a list of commitments the FS and BLM will carry out within the range of bull trout...As far as we are aware, the IPNF has not identified all key and special emphasis watersheds only the “priority” watersheds identified soon after INFISH was adopted by Forest Plan amendment. We have also not seen an “improved monitoring strategy” put forth by the IPNF. Please disclose which of the...commitments the IPNF has met, and please cite documentation on that compliance.”

*These commitments are being addressed at the Forest level (through the Forest Plan revision process) and at the basin level (through the Geographic Assessment for the Coeur d’Alene River Basin), with implementation at the project level (through such efforts as the ongoing Iron Honey and anticipated Teratoid Tepee projects). Restoration activities have been identified at the National, Regional and Forest Levels. Funding is being allocated at the National level to implement restoration activities in high priority areas.*

*Standards and guidelines from the Inland Native Fish Strategy were used specifically to protect water and aquatic biota within the project area. Standard widths for defining interim Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas were utilized without modification (page 17 of this decision document).*

*As stated in the Revised Final EIS (page II-32), the Ecosystem Team for the IPNF facilitated development of a Corporate Monitoring System in December 1999. The monitoring is tied closely to the findings of the Interior Columbia Basin findings and the Geographic Assessment. The data that will be tracked for long-term monitoring is provided on page II-33 of the Revised Final EIS, and in Attachment C of this decision document.*

*The Forest Service completed Section 7 consultation at the watershed level on July 9, 1998, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with our findings in their Biological Opinion dated September 15, 1998. We also consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding this Small Sales project (Project Files, Document BA-2).; they provided written concurrence with our findings in their letter dated June 6, 2000 (Project Files, Document BA-1).*

C-16. “The FEIS’s claim that Fish Standard 1 is no longer applicable is not correct. The IPNF has not amended the Forest Plan to allow noncompliance with the Standard.”

*The inapplicability of Fish Standard 1 has been reviewed and is supported by other agencies (Idaho Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality) and scientific research (Revised Final EIS, page III-178). The analysis indicates that implementation of project activities would maintain or enhance current conditions for fish species viability. This is based on no changes in stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, aquatic habitat diversity, cover complexity, or channel stability; with possible increases in habitat diversity, cover complexity, and channel stability where long-term reductions in risk would occur (Revised Final EIS, page III-179).*



Letter A

Rec'd 11 May 2001

## Kootenai Environmental Alliance

P.O. Box 1598 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816-1598

Joseph P. Stringer, District Ranger  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District  
Fernan Office  
2502 East Sherman Avenue  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

May 10, 2001

Dear Mr. Stringer:

The following comments are in regards to the District's Small Sales Final EIS [revised].

### A. Cumulative effects:

Our May 12, 2000 letter to the Coeur d'Alene River District Ranger raised a number of issues pertaining to past Forest Service timber sales in each of the Analysis Areas, including the issue of new logging units that would be adjacent to, or near to current logging units, pages 10, 11 and 12.

The NEPA requirements regarding cumulative impacts are described at 40 CFR 1508.7. Included, as part of 1508.7 is the following sentence. "Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time."

NEPA at 40 CFR 1508.8 effects under (b) in discussing indirect effects includes "related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems." 40 CFR 1508.8(b) also states "Effects and impacts as used in these regulations are synonymous. Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), ..."

As was pointed out in the Small Sales DEIS and in the Small Sales FEIS [revised], nearly every watershed in every Analysis Area is classified as either NPF or FAR. It is clear there have been significant negative impacts to these watersheds from past logging and road building. It is also clear that there has been and continue to be cumulative impacts to the watersheds and fisheries from the numerous timber sales that have taken place in the NPF and FAR watersheds.

The paper maps in the Map Packet do not indicate the locations of the current-logging units in each of the Project Areas in relation to where the new logging units are proposed. Since there are serious watershed problems in a significant number of the watersheds where the new logging units are planned, there clearly have been cumulative effects to the watersheds from the t.s.'s cited on page 7 of our May 12, 2000 letter. The Forest Service t.s.'s cited were each accompanied with a NEPA document that indicated there

would not be any significant impact to the watersheds or to the fisheries or fisheries habitat.

Concerning Project Areas and logging units, the map for the Cataldo Face and Fourth of July Project Areas indicates 50 proposed logging units. Recent T.S.'s in the cumulative effects analysis area would include large sales such as; Mason, Murray, Mill Rose Curran, Rantenan, and Brown Owl.

Directly adjacent to these Project Areas are the Gimlet, Owl and Little Tepee Project Areas. 21 new logging units are shown on the map for the Gimlet area, 21 new logging units are shown on the map for the Little Tepee area, and 35 new logging units are shown for the Owl area.

There are a total of 127 new logging units being proposed with 284 acres of logging within the 5 cumulative effects analysis areas cited. Recent Forest Service t.s's for the 3-area cumulative effects analysis area would include: Brown Owl, Breakwater, TeBreak, and Bumblebee.

Collectively, the Breakwater, Brown Owl, Bumblebee, Murray, and TeBreak t.s's clearcut approximately 2,225 acres between the years 1989 and 1994. The maps do not indicate any of the logging units associated with these sales. Clearcuts associated with these sales and the other recent Forest Service t.s's cited are also not indicated on the paper maps.

There have also been recent timber sales in the White and Potosi Project Areas that have included clearcut units. 7 new units are proposed for the White area and 32 new units are proposed for the Potosi area, with a total of 257 acres proposed for logging. The locations of the current logging units are not displayed on the maps. The Prichard and Shoshone Project Areas also have had recent t.s.'s and there are a total of 31 new logging units proposed for these 2 Areas, with 153 acres of new logging being proposed in the 2 areas. No locations of current logging units are displayed on the maps for the 2 Areas.

There is no detailed discussion in the Forest Vegetation section or the Watershed section of the Small Sales FEIS [revised] regarding the proposed units being placed adjacent to or near to the current logging units in each Project Area, except for the discussion on page 65 of Chapter III. The discussion is limited to logging units that would be greater than 40 acres in size in the White area and Shoshone area.

NEPA at 40 CFR 1502.22 concerns incomplete or unavailable information. The Small Sales FEIS [revised] did not indicate whether accurate, high quality information regarding locations of recent logging units in each Project Area is incomplete or unavailable.

If there is incomplete and/or unavailable accurate, high quality information pertaining to the locations of recent logging units in any or all of the Project Areas, the cumulative effects analysis is incomplete.

If there are one or more unavailable NEPA documents that contain fisheries and watershed analysis associated with timber sales that took place after 1980 in one or more

of the Project Areas where new logging is being proposed, the cumulative effects analysis is incomplete, particularly in the Areas that have NPF and/or FAR watersheds.

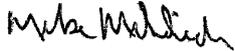
If there is accurate, high quality information available regarding the locations of recent logging unit for each of the Project Areas, the Small Sales FEIS [revised] did not indicate why this information was not included in the FEIS [revised].

B. Additional issues:

There were a number of issues besides cumulative effects that were raised in our May 12, 2000 letter and they include; WATBAL/ WATSED, Monitoring/Evaluation, the CWA, NFMA, fisheries, and road construction/ reconstruction. These continue to be significant issues in relation to the Action Alternatives described in the FEIS [revised].

We wish to receive a copy of the ROD and final document when they are released.

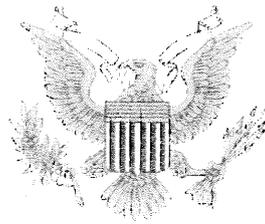
Sincerely,



Mike Mihelich

Forestry and Water Committee

Letter B



631 WEST FAIRBANKS AVENUE  
WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

(407) 645-4447  
FAX: (407) 625-2220  
E-MAIL: KBROOTEN@AOL.COM

1817 NINETEENTH STREET, N.W.  
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PLEASE REPLY TO:  
FLORIDA

LAW OFFICES  
**KENNETH E. BROOTEN, JR.**  
CHARTERED

**The Oxbow™ Ranch**  
**Bascom, Florida 32423-9361**  
**May 13, 2001**

**BY TELEFAX AND FEDERAL EXPRESS**

Mr. Joe Stringer, District Ranger  
United States Department of Agriculture  
United States Forest Service  
Coeur d' Alene River Ranger District  
2502 East Sherman Avenue  
Coeur d' Alene, Idaho 83814

IN RE: Fern Creek Property T49N. R1W, S15  
Comment Small Sales Final Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Springer:

I have read with interest the letters of comment from adjacent landowners as well as several "Officious Intermeddlers." Unfortunately, I was not advised of this injunction until my mother Sadie Brooten sent me a newspaper clipping about an injunction having issued without notice to adjacent landowners. After speaking to your Regional Legal Counsel and his Assistant Allen Campbell, I have determined that the area affected by the injunction is not within the boundaries of my property but is subject to a Small Sales EIS which your office has very promptly provided me by CD-ROM.

I am enclosing for your information a copy of a letter that I wrote to Ms. Sherri Lionberger of your staff dated August 3, 2000. There is a Douglas Fir Bark Beetle infestation within 100 feet of my boundary line to the Coeur d' Alene National Forrest. There are several practical effects to leaving that infestation, which directly affect me, my brother and sister all of whom own land contiguous to the Coeur d' Alene National Forrest.

First, if the infestation is not removed it may well advance into my property in which case the Forest Service will be liable because it is foreseeable that Douglas Fir Bark Beetles migrate onto adjacent lands under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Mr. Joe Springer  
May 13, 2001  
Page 2

Second, if the infestation is not removed there is a dramatic risk of forest fires in the immediate area. Where, as here, the wind blows both up and down the drainage area for Fern Creek, it is foreseeable that any Forest Fire will consume my property and that of my brother and sister.

Third, if the "Officious Intermeddlers" who are not real parties in interest or Indispensable Parties prevail, I have no remedy if they obtain an Injunction without Notice [See **Mullhane v. Central Hanover Bank and Trust**] and no bond to pursue restoration of the burned areas. National Forest surrounds my property on 3 sides.

I have spent a great deal of time reviewing the various comments, proposals and carefully considered them in view of the legal obligation of the U. S. Forest Service as a Fiduciary to the American Taxpayers, whose interest is being denuded by the issuance of Injunctions for those with their own agenda whose standing I seriously question.

This land which now belongs to my brother, sister and myself was initially homesteaded by my Grandfather and his brother in 1898 and has been in my family since that time. We fully intend to keep it in the family and manage it as a renewable resource for the benefit of our children and grandchildren. If it is destroyed by fire, which is a foreseeable event if the infestation is not harvested, then we will have a piece of land that is virtually worthless in terms of a natural resource. It will cost by my estimates more than \$1 million dollars to reforest and clean up the sequale of a forest fire. Similarly, I will loose corporate opportunity in the form of an Elk Ranch which is now being built on my property and a hunting lodge.

As you may be aware, I had a dispute with the Forest Service several years ago about a clear cut, which changed the water flow of the creek and caused many of my trees to slide into the creek. It is my understanding that the profits from the sale of this still merchantable infested timber are to be used to clean up the area. I am very pleased to report that the Forest Service was very responsive to my complaints and took immediate action to recontour 3 miles of logging roads and replant the entire area. Even the District Counsel from Missoula came to the property to inspect it. Their appropriate and direct action avoided protracted litigation AND demonstrated to me that your office is responsibly managing our natural resources as it is mandated to do for the benefit of the American taxpayers. One of your Senior Rangers Steve Bateman was particularly helpful and it was he who explained to me in detail the consequences of the infestation of Douglas Fir Bark Beetles.

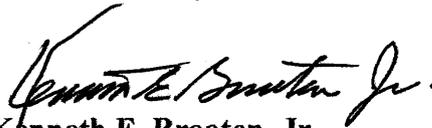
Mr. Joe Springer, District Ranger  
May 13, 2001  
Page 3

My letter to Ms. Lionberger is clear. I not only fully endorse your plan but I insist that it be carried out. I am also in the process of drafting legislation which will provide that "Officious Intermeddlers" who file spurious litigation and obtain Injunctions be required to post Bonds in an amount that is three times of the actual damage that may occur to the Forest Service by issuance of the injunction as well as adjacent landowners.

Finally, I would request that you keep me fully advised of all action which is taken so that I may intervene as a Real Party in Interest and an Indispensable Party pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. I am considering filing a Federal Declaratory Judgment Action directly against the "Officious Intermeddlers" individually and as a group, to Declare and adjudicate my right as a taxpayer and contiguous landowner to have the United States National Forests managed properly without interference from "Officious Intermeddlers" who have nothing at stake but their own agenda at the expense of the American Taxpayer. I recognize the difference between a National Park and a National Forest, they apparently do not.

You may contact me at the non-classified telephone number listed in my letter to Sherri Lionberger dated August 3, 2000, should you have any questions whatsoever. The letter to Ms. Lionberger is not part of my Comments on your proposed action but for your information and unfortunately to Place the United States Forest Service on Official Notice of my intentions.

Sincerely,



**Kenneth E. Brooten, Jr.**  
**Chief Counsel, United States Congress (Ret.)**

Enclosure: Copy of Letter to Sherri Lionberger (Not to be included with my comments  
EMBARGOED pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552, Level 5)

Cc: Barbara Brooten Job  
Kent E. Brooten  
Kirk Neal

Kent E. Brooten

Kent, WA 98042-3944

May 14, 2001

Mr. Joe Stringer, District Ranger  
USFS  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District  
2502 East Sherman Ave.  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

RE: Comment on Small Sales Final EIS

Dear Mr. Stringer:

The purpose of this letter is to comment on the Small Sales Final EIS as solicited in your letter of April 6, 2001, File code 1950.

I am in favor of Alternative 2 as outlined in the Final EIS.

I am a land owner with property adjacent to National Forest property in Fern Creek. In the EIS, the affected area is denoted as "Cataldo Face and Fourth of July Project Areas".

My family has managed and worked this area as a responsible tree farm owner for longer than the United States Forest Service has been in existence.

We have practiced selective logging on the property for nearly a century. That practice has proven to be optimal use of the resources while maintaining our status as responsible property owners in the community.

In regard to the EIS, let me first offer this analogy:

Let's suppose my neighbor has a herd of cattle. One day, one of the cows becomes sick. The appropriate response for the neighbor is to isolate the animal, determine the problem and do what is necessary to get the animal healthy again. If he does nothing, the whole herd gets sick. Then my herd gets sick. Clearly, it's irresponsible of my neighbor if he does nothing to stop the spread of the disease.

Many years ago when I was a child, I recall my mother harvesting a stand of white pine which was infected with blister rust. As I recall, the District Ranger was anxious we harvest the infected trees so that it wouldn't spread to the adjacent National Forest. Nor did we want the remaining trees on our property to become infected. It was all accomplished as planned.

Now the shoe is on the other foot. The National Forest has the infected trees. If you do nothing, it will spread to my property. If you do nothing, the trees will die, it will create a tremendous fire hazard.

Congress has directed the Forest Service to "manage national forests for additional multiple uses and benefits and for the sustained yield of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation. Multiple use means managing resources under the best combination of uses to

May 14, 2001  
Page 2

benefit the American people while ensuring the productivity of the land and protecting the quality of the environment."

Failing to act now will destroy the renewable resources. Failing to act now will diminish the productivity of the land as well as fail to protect the quality of the environment not only in the national forests but in the adjoining private lands as well.

I urge the completion of Alternative 2 immediately.

Sincerely,



Kent E. Brooten

Letter C

**The Ecology Center, Inc.**

**801 Sherwood Street, Suite B**

**Missoula, MT 59802**

**(406) 728-5733**

**(406) 728-9432 fax**

***ecocenter@wildrockies.org***

May 14, 2001

Joseph Stringer, District Ranger  
Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District  
2502 East Sherman Avenue  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814

Mr. Stringer;

These are comments on the Small Sales Final EIS, on behalf of Alliance for the Wild Rockies, the Ecology Center, and the Lands Council.

The 30-day comment period on the Small Sales FEIS is not long enough for the public to thoroughly review the proposal. Your April 23 letter to the Ecology Center states that the Final EIS is not substantially different from the draft EIS or Supplement. I guess you want the public to take your word on that. In order for one to agree, one must read the entire document of almost 400 pages, and the hundreds of pages of other documents incorporated by reference.

To date, the Forest Service has not adequately responded to the details raised in our September 25, 2000 appeal of the Small Sales ROD. The appeal also pointed out that the Forest Service had not responded to comments made on the Draft EIS, and at the scoping level. After we appealed the ROD, it was remanded. This makes it both reasonable and requisite that the Forest Service provide detailed responses each in the appeal. We could simply paste in the text from that appeal into these comments, but that is entirely unnecessary since the Coeur d'Alene River District has a complete copy of the appeal. We incorporate our entire September 25, 2000 appeal of the Small Sales ROD as comments on this FEIS.

We also incorporate the Ecology Center's January 25, 2000 letter to the Forest Supervisor, which the Coeur d'Alene River District Ranger received a copy, within these comments on the FEIS. As our appeal pointed out, the Forest Service has never adequately responded to those issues, either.

We incorporate all of Plaintiff's briefs, declarations, and other supporting documentation in the ongoing litigation on the

Douglas-Fir Beetle Project (Lands Council et al., v. Vaught) as comments on the Small Sales FEIS. The IPNF has a copy and knows the relevance of each of the issues, facts, and arguments contained therein to this proposed Small Sales Project.

The IPNF relies upon scientifically unsound modeling to assess sufficiency of snag habitat. Forest Service Scientists have recognized the inadequacy of the Thomas, 1979 guidelines upon which IPNF snag Standards are based. The IPNF even recognized this in the 1999 Douglas-fir Beetle FEIS, which was cited as Bull et al., 1997 which we further discuss, below. The Small Sales FEIS includes this same research in its list of references, however, the IPNF has not performed the necessary analysis—at any planning level—to determine the numbers of snags and leave trees that are necessary to maintain viable populations.

It is troubling that the IPNF has failed in its duty to update its Forest Plan numerical Standards to reflect new scientific information. The courts have found that if the Forest Service fails to provide adequate scientific basis then its actions are arbitrary and capricious. Blue Mountain Biodiversity Project v. Blackwood, 161 F. Third, 1208 (9th Circuit 1998); Friends of the Bitterroot v. U.S. Forest Service, No. CV-92-047-BU.

From a Bull et al., 1997 Forest Service research paper:

The guide most widely used in the past, Thomas and others (1979), prescribed the number of nest and roost trees to leave for specified woodpecker populations, but the number was based on a hypothetical, untested model and did not include any snags for foraging. Three studies (Baste 1995, Bull and Holthausen 1993, Dixon 1995) conducted in eastern Oregon have shown that retaining foraging structure is essential, in addition to nest and roost trees in managed landscapes. The Thomas model provided only two roost trees per pair per year, yet research has shown that individual pairs of pileated woodpeckers and white-headed woodpeckers use considerably more than two per year (Bull and others, 1992, Dixon 1995). Radio-telemetry studies have shown that home range sizes of pileated woodpeckers (Bull and Holthausen 1993), white-headed woodpeckers (Dixon 1995), and three-toed and black-backed woodpeckers (Goggans and others 1988) are considerably larger than those used in the Thomas model. Raphael and White (1984) found that the relation between numbers of snags and cavity nesters is not linear, which was assumed in the Thomas model. The substitution factor used in the Thomas model is variable and largely a

function of snag density. Neitro and others (1985) thought allowing substitution of snags that reduced the number retained was not appropriate. The Thomas model did not take into account the habitat needs of some of the secondary cavity nesters, like bats and brown creepers, that use such snag features as loose bark. In addition, Bull and Holthausen (1993) found lower densities of pileated woodpeckers in nine study areas than predicted by Thomas and others (1979) based on the number of snags present. The above studies present new data suggesting that some of the assumptions and data used in the Thomas model are not valid, and that the prescribed snag densities need to be revised upward.

Ideally, data would be available on the exact number of snags required to support specific populations of primary and secondary cavity nesters. Unfortunately, this kind of information is not available. We don't know, however, that the snag numbers presented by Thomas and others (1979) are not adequate to support the populations intended because of a lack of foraging strata and invalid assumptions used in the model. If management agencies have an objective to manage for viable populations of woodpeckers, providing numbers of snags that have been shown to support viable populations in the recent studies would be prudent.

The FEIS fails to reconcile its reliance on Thomas (1979) with the fact that its own scientists regard Thomas (1979) to be out-of-date and inadequate for maintaining viable populations of snag dependent and cavity nesting species.

The FEIS fails to demonstrate compliance with even the inadequate snag and cavity nesting Standards as laid out in Forest Plan Appendix X. Viability of snag dependent and cavity nesting species cannot be assured following the logging activities contemplated by the action alternatives.

The SS FEIS highlights the continued unwillingness of the IPNF to utilize the best available science to update and improve its snag retention Standards, and update its management practices to assure that sufficient habitat for Threatened, Sensitive and management indicator species is maintained.

Forest Plan Appendix X Wildlife Standard 2 requires, "Where cavity habitat is lacking due to past management activities, mitigation needs will be identified in the EA's and SAI plans

will be developed and implemented to correct the situation" (page 7). Based on the information in the FEIS, nobody can tell if past management activity has left snag habitat "lacking" anywhere in the project area from past "management" although if forestwide monitoring of the situation is any sign, it likely is lacking<sup>1</sup>. And although the Forest Plan Appendix X Wildlife Standard 3 requires post-project monitoring, there is no information in the FEIS that discloses the results of such monitoring.

The FEIS does not adequately demonstrate compliance with the newly adopted Roads Policy.

We believe that the FEIS's incorporation of other documents does not agree with NEPA regulations at 40 CFR § 1502.21 which state:

Agencies shall incorporate material into an environmental impact statement by reference when the effect will be to cut down on bulk without impeding agency and public review of the action. The incorporated material shall be cited in the statement and its content briefly described. No material may be incorporated by reference unless it is reasonably available for inspection by potentially interested persons within the time allowed for comment.

We wonder when the Forest Service would deem it appropriate to consider cumulative effects at the scale of entire the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Flooding occurs in this watershed more frequently than would occur if the basin had not been devastated by so much logging, road building, mining, and other developments. The Forest Service is quite aware of the aggradation, the destruction of fish habitat, the high amounts of bedload sediment, and other existing problems with the river. Furthermore, the Forest Service is also aware of several activities ongoing or proposed on national forest and land of other ownership in the Coeur d'Alene River Basin. The Forest Service has never provided an adequate explanation of why all such cumulative effects cannot be considered in one EIS.

The Forest Service needs an updated programmatic planning process to adjust its guidance following fifteen years of Forest Plan implementation. Much new information exists since the Plan ROD was signed, species have been listed under the ESA, Sensitive species have been identified—the Coeur d'Alene River District is operating on an outdated plan.

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<sup>1</sup>The IPNF Forest Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report, 1998, pp. 64-65 states, "...guidelines were not met on over half of the surveyed units."

For example, the Forest Plan is written with scant notice of the needs to take action to restore the Forest. The FEIS discloses what it calls "opportunities" to restore the watershed. There are likely hundreds more watershed and ecologically damaging conditions in the area. Still, the Purpose and Need is written so narrowly as to preclude the possibility of actually addressing those problems in a true restoration alternative.

Whereas the DEIS stated that logging was proposed for unsuitable acres, the FEIS contradicts that.

When will surveys of proposed activity areas be undertaken for raptors and other wildlife that would be directly harmed by logging activities, and who would do the surveys?

The FEIS is written as to assume that 25% of timber receipts would go to the counties, yet that is not necessarily the case. On October 30, 2000, Public Law 106-393, the Secure Rural Schools And Community Self-Determination Act Of 2000 was signed into law.

The numbers from Table III-23 don't agree with the numbers from Table III-22.

The FEIS discloses inadequate up-to-date information on the conditions of all the streams falling within the watersheds to be affected.

On the top of page III-103, the FEIS assumes that the cumulative effects on watersheds is correlated only with the amount of acres logged. We don't believe that is a reasonable assumption and in fact, that is contradicted by other statements in the analysis.

In a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dated June 19, 1998, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management revised their earlier Biological Assessment (BA) which made a determination of effects on bull trout as a result of the implementation of their Land and Resource Management Plans (as amended by INFISH and PACFISH).

Attached to that June 19 letter were a list of commitments the FS and BLM will carry out within the range of bull trout. Below are excerpts of the letter, many involving nondiscretionary, mandatory commitments that must occur before developments go forward:

- Conduct a road evaluation/inventory and develop a multi-year road restoration strategy for key, priority and special emphasis watersheds.

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing unroaded and low density roaded areas (throughout the Columbia and Klamath drainages) to determine their importance for long-term conservation of bull trout.
- Develop an improved monitoring strategy for effectiveness and implementation.
- Develop a restoration and improvement strategy.
- Develop schedules for Watershed Analysis based on key and priority watershed network priorities. ...Identify "special emphasis" watersheds to ensure a comprehensive refugia network for the protection and recovery of bull trout:  
Key and priority watershed networks: reexamine the structure and function of INFISH priority and PACFISH key watershed networks to ensure the protection and recovery of bull trout and listed sucker metapopulations.
  - a. Identify and clarify the primary functions of key, priority, and special emphasis watershed.
  - b. Identify special emphasis watersheds (within 60 days of BO signing) to ensure a comprehensive refugia network for the protection and recovery of bull trout and listed suckers.
  - c. Completing watershed analysis in existing INFISH priority watersheds, and special emphasis watersheds ... is a priority. Project decisions will be guided by the results of watershed analysis.
  - d. Priorities and schedules for watershed analysis will be developed concurrently with #1 (above) and updated annually.
- Increased emphasis on compliance with INFISH/PACFISH Aquatic Conservation Strategy and Standards and Guidelines.
- The FS and BLM, in cooperation with the NMFS and FWS, will develop and implement strategies that will integrate and coordinate restoration, protection, and evaluation measures ... to expeditiously achieve restoration objectives at multiple scales ... Restoration opportunities will be identified through an agreed upon approach using existing funding, information and programs, and incorporating new information as it becomes available. Initial strategy development will be completed by March 1, 1999.
- [Regarding Road Evaluation and Planning (PACFISH and INFISH standards RF-2 and RF-3)]:  
Using existing information and road definitions, the FWS will be provided with road inventories on the management units in the three bull trout DPSs within 120 days of BO signature. This information should include a description of road definitions and survey methodology used. Information gaps will be identified and a schedule will be developed to provide information to the FWS within 2 years. ...As part of watershed analyses, road information and other appropriate information will be used to collaborate with NFMS and FWS in developing restoration strategies. Restoration strategies will be used

to identify key processes needing attention, prioritize key locations and project types, address implementation and scheduling issues and provide a preliminary estimate of costs. These strategies will serve as the primary framework for implementation of integrated restoration activities.

- Long-term Conservation and Recovery: FS and BLM will use their authorities in carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species consistent with Section 7.a(1) of ESA. b.1. Provide a mechanism (within 120 days of signature) that ensures full implementation of programmatic aquatic conservation measures at all organizational levels for the bull trout and sucker species addressed in the BA (for bull trout and suckers dated) June 15, 1998. 2. Provide a strategy which will be used if funding or priorities prevent full implementation of the aquatic conservation measures.
- The FS and BLM, in coordination with the FWS, will complete section 7 consultation at the watershed level by May 1999. The watershed consultation will follow the approach agreed to in the January 27, 1998 letter of direction on bull trout conferencing, with modifications as agreed to by the agencies.
- After the effective date of the bull trout listing, and until the watershed consultations are completed, all ongoing and proposed actions must conform to INFISH and PACFISH guidelines and these seven commitments. (This means watershed level consultations must be completed before any proposed actions can go forward.)

As far as we are aware, the IPNF has not identified all key and special emphasis watersheds—only the "priority" watersheds identified soon after INFISH was adopted by Forest Plan amendment.

We have also not seen an "improved monitoring strategy" put forth by the IPNF.

Please disclose which of the above commitments the IPNF has met, and please cite documentation on that compliance.

The FEIS's claim that Fish Standard 1 is no longer applicable is not correct. The IPNF has not amended the Forest Plan to allow noncompliance with the Standard.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please keep each group on the list to receive all future communications regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,



Jeff Juel

and on behalf of:

Mike Petersen  
The Lands Council  
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