

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: USFS South Yaak Fire Salvage Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date: September 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023
Proponent: USFS Three Rivers Ranger District
Location: sections 20 & 33, T33N R33W (along Kilbrennan Lake Road)
County: Lincoln

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To allow the operation of wheeled or tracked equipment in a streamside management zone, to yard across (while fully suspended) a class 2 stream, to harvest additional trees (retain fewer than minimum required), to remove logs from stream, and to skid logs on a road within an SMZ. The purpose of this action is to improve public safety and maintain safe road access to private lands and developed recreation sites. This proposed action would allow the salvaging of trees killed during the summer 2021 South Yaak fire. The alternative practice would allow for management and restoration along approximately 1200 feet of class 1 stream and 900 feet of class 2 stream.

This Alternative Practice EA is tiering to the USFS EA titled South Yaak Fire Salvage Project. This decision notice was signed on July 15, 2022. Please refer to the USFS EA for their findings of impacts.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

DNRC was consulted in mid-December 2021 by USFS. USFS has handled all public involvement.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

USFS conducted their environmental analysis, the DNRC has jurisdiction over the SMZ law and any alternative practices, the USFS has jurisdiction over fire protection, State historical preservation office has jurisdiction over cultural and historic resources. DEQ and Lincoln County have jurisdiction over air shed burning permits.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

No action alternative:

Do not issue AP, thus effectively eliminating the option to salvage fire killed trees from within the SMZ. Approximately 2100 lineal feet of stream will remain unsalvaged. This will increase likelihood of dead trees falling on the open Kilbrennan Lake roadway for years to come.

Action alternative:

Issue Alternative Practice that allows operation of wheeled and tracked equipment within the SMZ, allows cutting of additional trees (retaining fewer than the minimum required), removal of logs fallen into the stream (fully suspended), yarding across the stream (fully suspended) and skidding of logs on a road within the SMZ.

This would allow USFS to meet their stated need of improving the safety of all users of the Kilbrennan Lake Road. Mitigate by: 1) operating within the SMZ under dry or frozen and snow-covered conditions to minimize soil and water impacts, 2) recontour and revegetate any trails used within the SMZ, 3) all trees predicted to survive the fire damage are to be retained, 4) fully suspend materials while removing trees that span the stream course, 5) hand clean all debris that was deposited in the stream channel promptly, and 6) apply BMPs during operations.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain *POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS* following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

Kootenai Land Type 352 & 355; these soil types are glaciated mountain slopes. Productivity is high, though there is a moderate hazard of erosion along skid trails and sediment delivery efficiency is moderate. Operations following BMPs and limited operation while soil is dry or frozen and snow covered mitigate impacts.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

USFS EA discloses that there would be none to minor impacts to water resources.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

USFS EA discloses that there would be none to minor impacts to air resources.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

USFS EA discloses that there would be none to minor impacts to vegetation resources.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

USFS EA discloses that there would be none to minor impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic resources.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Threatened or endangered species such as grizzly bears, Canada lynx, and Wolverine may be affected. Please refer to USFS EA for additional impact details.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are expected.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No further impacts to aesthetics are expected beyond what impacts the fire had.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No limited resources will be used for this project. There are no other activities nearby that will affect the project.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

USFS has the South Yaak Fire Salvage Project Environmental Assessment decision was released on July 15, 2022.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Normal Health risks associated with a logging operation. The purpose of the proposed action is to improve human health and safety over the current conditions.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project will add a minor amount of additional timber to the local wood products industry.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.

This project would add ≈5 days of additional work and income to the contractor.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Minor additional income tax revenue would be generated from the additional work.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There would not be any affects to the local government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There is no known zoning or management planning for this area.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This activity would have no impact to access to or quality of recreational and wilderness activities for the public.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

This activity would have no impact to density or distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Logging is an activity that would be considered a traditional lifestyle for this community and area; this activity would not disrupt social structures.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Cultural uniqueness and diversity would not be affected.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

There are no unique social or economic qualities on this site.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeremy Rank	Date: 7/26/2022
	Title: Service Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

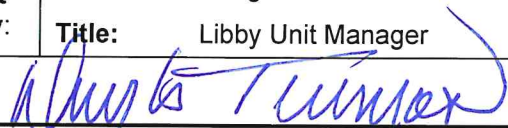
The Action Alternative is selected. Issue Alternative Practice that allows operation of wheeled and tracked equipment within the SMZ, allows cutting of additional trees (retaining fewer than the minimum required), removal of logs fallen into the stream (fully suspended), yarding across the stream (fully suspended) and skidding of logs on a road within the SMZ. This would allow USFS to meet their stated need of improving the safety of all users of the Kilbrennan Lake Road. Mitigate by: 1) operating within the SMZ under dry or frozen and snow-covered conditions to minimize soil and water impacts, 2) recontour and revegetate any trails used within the SMZ, 3) all trees predicted to survive the fire damage are to be retained, 4) fully suspend materials while removing trees that span the stream course, 5) hand clean all debris that was deposited in the stream channel promptly, and 6) apply BMPs during operations.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

All action alternatives have the potential to have impacts to the land, water and wildlife resources. This action alternative proposes to both minimize these impacts while still allowing management activities to proceed. The application of proposed mitigations as well as forestry BMPs will minimize impact to water quality.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Douglas Turman	
	Title: Libby Unit Manager	
Signature:		Date: 8/2/22