

Categorical Exclusion Review
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Boise District Office
Four Rivers Field Office

Dry Buck Thinning

CE No.: DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2011-0042-CX	Lease/Serial/Case File No.: IDI-33596
Purpose and Need for Action: The need for this project is to maintain stand health, vigor, and resilience to wildfire. The stand is composed of entirely ponderosa pine. The present stand density is such that health and vigor is diminishing. As stand density increases, tree health, vigor and fire resilience decreases; while potential for bark beetle infestation of low vigor pine increases. The proposed activities would reverse this decline. The project is outside of any riparian areas.	
Description of Proposed Action: The stand would be thinned from below. The largest, most dominant trees in the overstory would be the favored leave trees. These large, dominant trees are vigorous and most resilient to wildfire. Dense thickets of ponderosa pine saplings would also be thinned. This thinning of the understory breaks the continuity of the “ladder fuels”. These ladder fuels are the lower and mid-canopy level fuels that allow fire to easily spread from the ground level to the upper canopy. Upper canopy fires, or crown fires, move very quickly across the landscape and put nearby private lands at higher risk	
The logging method would be tractor. Skid trails would be identified and approved by the BLM before skidding begins. Trees would be whole tree yarded with slash piled and burned at the log landings. Skid trails and landings would be scarified, water-barred and seeded. No road construction or reconstruction is required.	
This 40 acre parcel is adjacent to JR Simplot Company ownership on three sides and Idaho Department of Lands on the fourth side.	
Standard Operating Procedures:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trees dead longer than 1 year would be left as wildlife trees. Additional wildlife trees may be designated as determined appropriate by a Wildlife Biologist from the Four Rivers Field Office.• Monitoring for noxious weed invasion would occur for a minimum of three years following initial cutting treatment and if found would be treated using methods and herbicides analyzed and approved in the Boise District Noxious and Invasive Weed Environmental Assessment and Decision Record (2005).• Landings and any location of multiple skid passes would be grass seeded with a mixture of grasses/forbs as recommended by the Botanist for the Four Rivers Field Office.	
Project Location: The Dry Buck Thinning Project is in Boise County approximately 11 miles north of Horseshoe Bend, Idaho (Map 2). The legal location is T 9 N, R 2 W, Section 35.	
Applicant (if any): None	

Part I – Plan Conformance Review

This proposed Action is subject to the following land use plan: Cascade Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

Date Plan Approved: July 1, 1988

The Proposed Action has been reviewed for conformance with the Land Use Plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM MS 1617.3). The Proposed Action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Manage 26,663 acres of suitable commercial forest land for timber management and harvest. (Page 30)
 The public lands in the District containing commercial timber or other forest products such as firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees would be considered for harvest except where expressly closed by law or regulation. Some areas may also be subject to special restrictions to protect resources. (Page 59)

Remarks: Resource specialist have reviewed the Proposed Action and identified no conflict with laws or regulations. Additionally, no special restrictions beyond those included in the regular timber sale contract have been identified as necessary to implement this project.

Part II – NEPA Review

- A. **Categorical Exclusion Review:** The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under Bureau of Land Management's Procedures for Managing the NEPA Process, Chapter 11 of the Department of the Interior's Manual Part 516 [Federal Register: August 14, 2007 (Volume 72, Number 156)]. **Category description:** 11.9.C.(9) Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction.
- B. **Exceptions Review** (Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances Review): Review the 12 exceptions which apply to individual actions within categorical exclusion. Environmental documents (EA or EIS) must be prepared for any actions involving these exceptions. The following Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances applies to individual actions. Departmental instructions mandate that environmental documents **MUST BE PREPARED** for actions which may: (Mark applicable answer for each item. If "yes", prepare an EA/EIS and append this form to it.)

List of Extraordinary Circumstances

1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes No Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012

Comments/Explanation: None. Project area is very little used by public. Little traffic on haul route. Safety signs warning of log truck traffic will be posted at key locations.

2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; or ecologically significant or critical areas, or is not in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Yes No Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012

Comments/Explanation: Because of the small size and location of the project area, it would have virtually no effect on migratory birds since adjacent areas can be used. Other resources and characteristics are not present in the area.

3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].

Yes No Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012

Comments/Explanation: The activities included in this proposed action have been used many places throughout the District; with results that are well understood and not controversial. Other used of this area include grazing and recreational hunting. No unresolved conflicts between the project implementation and these other uses have been identified. No adjustments to grazing permits or area closures are anticipated following treatment.

4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> The activities included in this proposed action have been used many places throughout the District; with results that are well understood and not controversial. No unique or unknown risks were identified during scoping or specialist's analysis.		
5. Establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> No precedents would be set for future actions nor would there be any linkages to future proposed actions.		
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> Private land owners and the Idaho Department of Lands have managed their forested lands in the vicinity through the years. No cumulatively significant effects have been identified during scoping or specialist's analysis, in large part due to the small size of the proposed project.		
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Karen Kumiega 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> No Effect on historic properties. Cultural surveys/inventories and reconnaissance were completed. No historic properties were found. See Specialist Archeological and Historical Inventory Record, dated 6-28-2011.		
8. Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date for Plants: /s/ Mark E. Steiger 1-17-2012 Specialist Signature/Date for Wildlife: /s/ Michael McGee 1-12-2012 Specialist Signature/Date for Aquatics: /s/ J. Allen Tarter 1-18-2012
Plants, <i>Comments/Explanation:</i> Full Clearance – The project will not adversely impact any special status plant species or its habitat. See Clearance Worksheet, dated 6-7-2011.		
Wildlife, <i>Comments/Explanation:</i> Full Clearance – Recommendations incorporated into implementation include: 1) Maintaining all Ponderosa Pine greater than 24" DBH except those occurring in aspen stands. 2) Maintaining all existing snags. 3) Augmenting aspen stand development and health by removing all conifers within and near aspen stands. See Clearance Worksheet, dated 10-28-2011.		
Aquatics, <i>Comments/Explanation:</i> All harvest is beyond Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas buffers. Buffers are well vegetated moderate slopes. See email dated 1-11-2012.		
9. Violate a Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> The proposed action would be in compliance with all laws and requirements that pertain to environmental protection in the area, including but not limited to the Land Use Plan for the Four Rivers Field Office and the Idaho Forest Practices Act.		
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specialist Signature/Date: /s/ Frank Marsh 1-12-2012
<i>Comments/Explanation:</i> Low income or minority visitors to the area would not be affected any differently by the proposed activities than any other visitor or nearby resident. Proposed activities would help small logging operators who are struggling with the local depressed economy.		

Part III – Decision

I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to implement the project, as described, with the mitigation measures either identified below and the stipulation(s) described above.

Mitigation Measures/Other Remarks:

You have the right to appeal this decision to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board), in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1. In taking an appeal, there must be strict compliance with the regulations.

If you choose to appeal, a notice of appeal must be filed in this office within thirty (30) days of receipt of this letter for transmittal to the Board. If your notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, one must be filed with the Board within thirty (30) days after the notice of appeal was filed.

A copy of your notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs, must also be served upon the Office of the Solicitor, Field Solicitor-U.S. Department of the Interior, University Plaza, 960 Broadway Avenue, Suite 400, Boise, Idaho 83706. In any appeal, you should consider the high bidder on the sale as adverse parties to whom you must also serve these documents. Service must be accomplished within fifteen (15) days after filing in order to be in compliance with appeal regulations.

As provided by 43 CFR Part 4, you have the right to petition the Office of Hearings and Appeals to stay implementation of the decision; however, you must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision that address your interests and the manner by which they would be harmed.

A petition for stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied; (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits; (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted; and (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Should you choose to file one, your stay request must accompany your notice of appeal. A notice of appeal with petition for stay must be served upon the Board, Regional Solicitor, and adverse parties at the same time such documents are served on the deciding official at this office. The person signing the notice of appeal has the responsibility of proving eligibility to represent the appellant before the Board under its regulations at 43 CFR § 1.3.

Authorizing Official: /s/ Terry Humphrey

Date: 1-25-2012

Name: Terry Humphrey

Title: Field Manager, Four Rivers Field Office

Dry Buck Vicinity Map



