

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene Field Office
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

Grouse Island Forest Management
DECISION RECORD

Project Name: Grouse Island Forest Management

Office: Coeur d'Alene Field Office, Idaho

Subject Code (Case File No.): 5000

NEPA Register No.: DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2013-0006-CX

Location: Shoshone County, Idaho

Geographic Area: Approximately 2 ¼ miles west of Mullan, Idaho.

Legal Description: Boise Meridian, T. 48 N., R. 5 E, section(s) 21 tract 105; section 28 lots 10, 15, 16; section 29 lot 7; section 32 lot 1, NW1/4NE1/4.

I. Decision

It is my decision to implement a forest maintenance treatment on approximately 140 acres roughly two miles from Mullan, Idaho, in accordance with 43 CFR §5003 (see attached map). The treatment area is divided into two units which will be treated as follows:

Unit 1

Unit 1 encompasses approximately 70 acres within a mostly dry conifer forest vegetation cover type. Multiple species within this unit (primarily western white pine (WWP), Douglas-fir (DF), and grand fir (GF)) have become infected with various stem and root diseases causing increased mortality; resulting in an infected understory. Due to the extent of diseases within the unit a seed tree harvest would be conducted on the east and south facing slopes. An emphasis would be placed on retaining all healthy ponderosa pine (PP) and large (greater than 20") diameter trees of any species. By thinning from below, trees interfering with crown development of healthy dominant and co-dominant trees would be removed thus reducing ladder fuels and increasing the stands resiliency in the event of a wildfire.

Approximately 20-25 acres of the unit would be harvested using ground based logging systems and 40-45 acres would be harvested using cable systems with partial suspension (Attachment 2-Harvest Methods). Collector trails as well as the construction of a temporary road (approx. 600 feet) within this unit (Attachment 3-Road Construction) would be used to facilitate the movement of trees to landing areas located along existing roads.

Unit 2

Unit 2 encompasses approximately 70 acres of a mostly wet/cold forest vegetation cover type. There is a small area of dry conifer that exists in the southern part of the unit; however, the pre-dominant species within the unit are Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch (WL) with some

isolated pockets of lodgepole pine (LPP). Within this unit the majority of the LPP is infested with bark beetles resulting in isolated pockets of dead and dying standing trees. Additionally within this unit stem and root diseases are present. By removing dead and dying trees additional nutrients, water, and sunlight would be provided to the remaining trees, openings would be created for future natural recruitment and ladder fuels would be reduced increasing resiliency in the event of a wildfire. All large healthy trees (20" or greater) would be retained to maintain structure within the unit.

All 70 acres would be harvested using cable systems with partial suspension (Attachment 2-Harvest Methods). Approximately a 0.5 mile of an old existing road would be renovated within the unit to help facilitate the movement of trees to landing areas located along existing roads (Attachment 4-Road Renovation).

Environmental Design Features

Soils

Impacts from ground based logging would be minimized by design measures which include, but are not limited to: 1) collector trails being limited to a 12 feet width and then brought back to slope following logging operations; 2) the use of designated skid trails, utilizing pre-existing trails where practical; 3) restricting tractor logging to areas with slopes of 40% or less; 4) the first 200 feet of any new road construction would be obliterated; and 5) to reduce the impacts of soil compaction and drainage following harvesting operations heavily compacted skid trails, collector trails and roads would be scarified, grass seeded and fertilized.

Forest Vegetation/Fuels

Whole tree yarding (bringing entire tree to the landing where processing occurs) would also take place in both units in order to reduce the residual fuel loading throughout the project area. Following harvest activities non-merchantable materials would be slashed, machine or hand piled, and burned. All piled materials would be left for approximately one year to cure prior to burning. Each pile would be adequately protected from moisture prior to the beginning of the fall rainy season and then burned while adjacent areas are covered with snow or are otherwise determined unlikely to burn. All burning applications would be conducted in accordance with Coeur d'Alene Field Office Pile Burning Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2012-0009-EA) and Decision Record as well as the agency approved prescribed fire plan that adheres to smoke dispersal requirements and maintains firefighter and public safety.

After fuel levels have been decreased to an acceptable level, seedlings of historic species composition (e.g. ponderosa pine, white pine, and western larch) would be hand planted in large openings. Hand planted seedlings would be grown from seeds collected from sites with comparable environments within the Coeur d'Alene Field Office.

Wildlife

To reduce the impacts to nesting migratory birds, felling and slashing operations would be prohibited between April 15th and July 15th; however those dates could be extended if weather conditions indicate a late start to the nesting season. Within both units minimum snag requirements would be met to maintain adequate habitat for snag and cavity dependent animals.

In addition, an adequate amount of coarse woody debris (10-15 ton/acre) on the forest floor would be maintained to ensure long term forest health.

Noxious Weeds

All motorized equipment used for road construction and/or renovation, logging, and fuels mitigation work would be washed prior to being moved into the project area. All constructed, renovated, and decommissioned roads would be seeded with a certified weed-free grass/forb seed mixture as needed.

II. Rationale

The proposed action is in conformance with the Coeur d'Alene RMP and is a type of action the BLM has determined does not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

As described, the project has specifically been planned to meet forest management objectives. In reviewing the proposed action, I considered that the project falls within the scope of the 2007 Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan in three areas:

- (1) Restoration towards the historic species composition, structure, and function;
- (2) Maintain adequate habitat for snag- and cavity-dependent animals, with emphasis on migratory birds, waterfowl, and bats; and
- (3) Providing economic benefits through providing local jobs and wood to local mills to manufacture into forest products (e.g. dimensional lumber, chips, pulp, etc.).

The action is needed to in order to increase forest resiliency to current and future disturbances while maintaining a healthier larger diameter historic species composition. In addition, by removing trees interfering with crown development, hazardous fuels would be reduced thus decreasing the potential spread of wildfire. This project will incorporate design features that will reduce the impacts to soils, wildlife, forest vegetation and noxious weeds. These actions meet the need for action. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

III. Signature

/s/ K. Pavlat
Kurt E. Pavlat, Field Manager
Coeur d'Alene Field Office

12 April 2013
Date

Administrative Review Procedures

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer Kurt

Pavlat within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *Shoshone News Press* and the *Coeur d'Alene Press*, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states: "Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the *Coeur d'Alene Field Office* will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (c) states: "Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of decision or the notice of sale are not timely filed and shall not be considered." Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to him. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision as permitted by regulations at 5003.3(f).

If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of the decision notice, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the project decision will be reconsidered in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available, and the *Coeur d'Alene Field Office* will issue a protest decision.

For further information, contact Kurt Pavlat, Field Manager, at (208) 769-5038 or at the address listed below:

Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene Field Office
ATTN: Grouse Island Forest Management
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

U.S. Department of the Interior
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Coeur d'Alene Field Office
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Categorical Exclusion Documentation

Grouse Island Forest Management

Office: Coeur d'Alene Field Office

NEPA Register No. DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2013-0006-CX

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Location: Shoshone County, Idaho; approximately 2 ¼ miles west of Mullan, Idaho.
Boise Meridian, T. 48 N., R. 5 E, section 21 tract 105; section 28 lots 10, 15, 16; section 29 lot 7; section 32 lot 1, NW1/4NE1/4.

Project Description

Purpose and Need for Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to remove approximately one million board feet of dead and dying trees infected by insects and/or diseases on approximately 140 acres roughly two miles from Mullan, Idaho (Attachment 1-Vicinity Map) starting in the fall of 2013. This action is needed in order to increase forest resiliency to current and future disturbances while maintaining a healthier larger diameter historic species composition. In addition, by removing trees interfering with crown development, hazardous fuels would be reduced thus decreasing the potential spread of wildfire.

Proposed Action

As depicted on the map at Attachment 1, the project area would be broken into two units.

Unit 1

Unit 1 encompasses approximately 70 acres within a mostly dry conifer forest vegetation cover type. Multiple species within this unit (primarily western white pine (WWP), Douglas-fir (DF), and grand fir (GF)) have become infected with various stem and root diseases causing increased mortality; resulting in an infected understory. Due to the extent of diseases within the unit a seed tree harvest would be conducted on the east and south facing slopes. An emphasis would be placed on retaining all healthy ponderosa pine (PP) and large (greater than 20") diameter trees of any species. By thinning from below, trees interfering with crown development of healthy dominant and co-dominant trees would be removed thus reducing ladder fuels and increasing the stands resiliency in the event of a wildfire.

Approximately 20-25 acres of the unit would be harvested using ground based logging systems and 40-45 acres would be harvested using cable systems with partial suspension (Attachment 2-Harvest Methods). Collector trails as well as the construction of a temporary road (approx. 600 feet) within this unit (Attachment 3-Road Construction) would be used to facilitate the movement of trees to landing areas located along existing roads.

Unit 2

Unit 2 encompasses approximately 70 acres of a mostly wet/cold forest vegetation cover type. There is a small area of dry conifer that exists in the southern part of the unit; however, the pre-dominant species within the unit are Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch (WL) with some isolated pockets of lodgepole pine (LPP). Within this unit the majority of the LPP is infested with bark beetles resulting in isolated pockets of dead and dying standing trees. Additionally within this unit stem and root diseases are present. By removing dead and dying trees additional nutrients, water, and sunlight would be provided to the remaining trees, openings would be created for future natural recruitment and ladder fuels would be reduced increasing resiliency in the event of a wildfire. All large healthy trees (20" or greater) would be retained to maintain structure within the unit.

All 70 acres would be harvested using cable systems with partial suspension (Attachment 2-Harvest Methods). Approximately a 0.5 mile of an old existing road would be renovated within the unit to help facilitate the movement of trees to landing areas located along existing roads (Attachment 4-Road Renovation).

Environmental Design Features

Soils

Impacts from ground based logging would be minimized by design measures which include, but are not limited to: 1) collector trails being limited to a 12 feet width and then brought back to slope following logging operations; 2) the use of designated skid trails, utilizing pre-existing trails where practical; 3) restricting tractor logging to areas with slopes of 40% or less; 4) the first 200 feet of any new road construction would be obliterated; and 5) following harvesting operations heavily compacted skid trails, collector trails and roads would be scarified, grass seeded and fertilized.

Forest Vegetation/Fuels

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Noxious Weeds

All motorized equipment used for road construction and/or renovation, logging, and fuels mitigation work would be washed prior to being moved into the project area. All constructed, renovated, and decommissioned roads would be seeded with a certified weed-free grass/forb seed mixture as needed.

Land Use Plan Conformance

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), this proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved June 2007. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Goal: Forestry and Woodland Products (FP-1): Provide forest products to help meet local and national demands while protecting the natural component of the environment.

Action FP-1.1.1-Identify and treat areas to promote forest health and restore forest stands to historic species composition, structure, and function by:

- Retaining large diameter trees when consistent with treatment objectives.
- Treating areas with excessive forest fuel loading and ingrowth.
- Treating areas with insect or disease infestation.
- Treating areas where other disturbances have occurred.

Goal: Vegetation Forest and Woodlands (VF)-1-Restore forest vegetation towards historic species composition, structure, and function across the landscape.

Objective VF-1.2-Restore forest stands to historic species composition, structure, and function by conducting vegetative treatments on approximately 8,200 acres.

Actions VF-1.2.1-Emphasize the use of natural disturbances, prescribed fire, and appropriate silvicultural methods to restore historic composition within wet/warm vegetation cover type (See Map 3 in Appendix G for the general location of this forest vegetation type within the planning area).

Action VF-1.2.2-Emphasize the use of natural disturbances, prescribed fire, and appropriate silvicultural methods to restore historic composition within dry conifer vegetation cover type (See Map 3 in Appendix G for the general location of this forest vegetation type within the planning area).

Action VF-1.2.3-Emphasize the use of regeneration harvest and natural and artificial regeneration to restore historic composition within the wet/cold vegetation cover type

(See Map 3 in Appendix G for the general location of this forest vegetation type within the planning area).

Action VF-1.2.4 -Conserve and restore aspen, birch, and cottonwood stands.

Action VF-1.2.6-Restore forest structure and function by reducing tree density and brush/shrub competition using appropriate silvicultural treatments including, but not limited to, intermediate treatments, release treatments, use of pesticides, and prescribed burning. Aerial spraying to control brush/shrub competition will not occur. Prioritize these treatments within FRCC 2 and FRCC 3 areas.

Objective VF-1.3-Maintain or enhance wildlife habitat function through the above objectives and actions, and in accordance with the goals, objectives, and actions listed in the Fish and Wildlife and Special Status Species sections.

Goal: Fish and Wildlife (FW)-2-Provide terrestrial habitats for a natural abundance and diversity of native and desirable nonnative wildlife species with self-sustaining populations in northern Idaho.

Objective FW-2.2-Maintain adequate habitat for snag- and cavity-dependent animals, with emphasis on migratory birds, waterfowl, and bats.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under NEPA in accordance with **516 DM 11.9.C(8)**, which excludes “salvaging dead or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction”. Application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix C, exist.

Signature

Authorizing Official: /s/ K. Pavlat Date: 10 April 2013
Kurt Pavlat, Field Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Debbie Paul, Forester (208)769-5028.

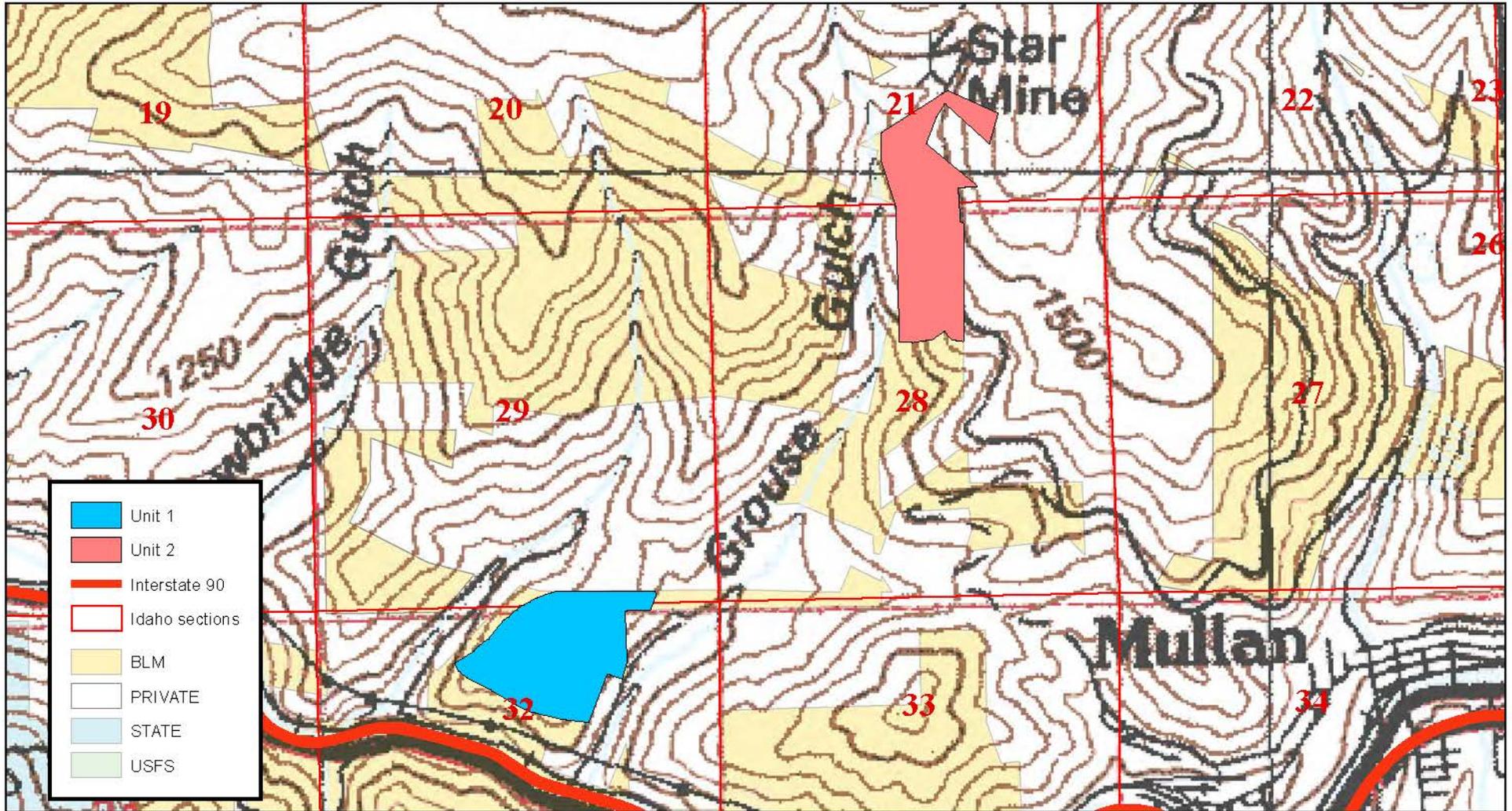
Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Vicinity Map
- Attachment 2: Harvest Methods
- Attachment 3: Road Construction
- Attachment 4: Road Renovations

Attachment 1-Vicinity Map

T48N R5E Sections 21, 28,29, and 32

Grouse Island Forest Management



Map Created: 1/25/2013

The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed. The following cannot be made Section 508 compliant. For help with its data or information, please contact the BLM Idaho State Office Webmaster at 208-373-4000.



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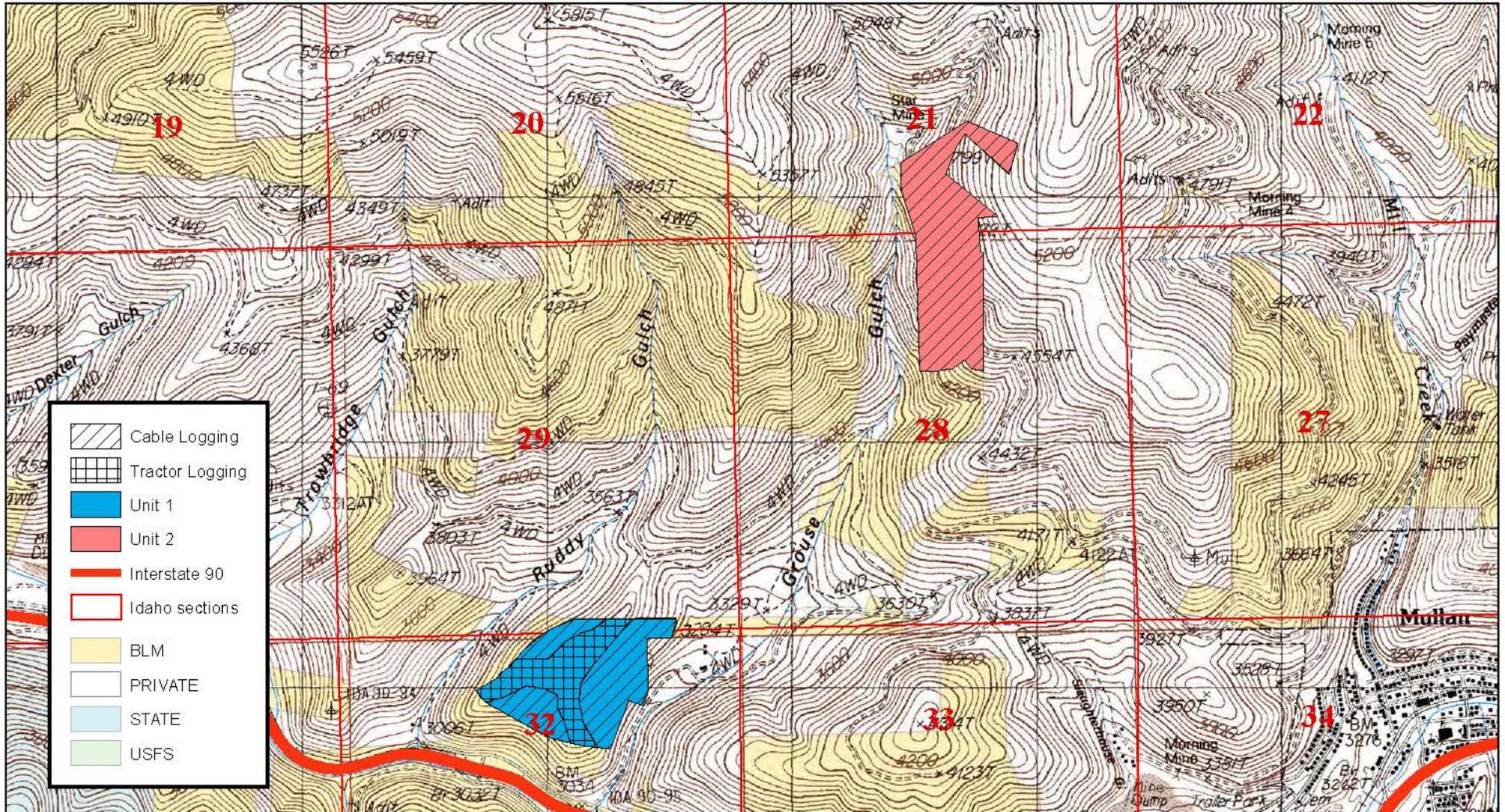
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Attachment 2-Harvest Methods

T48N R5E Sections 21, 28, 29, and 32

Grouse Island Forest Management



Map Created: 1/25/2013

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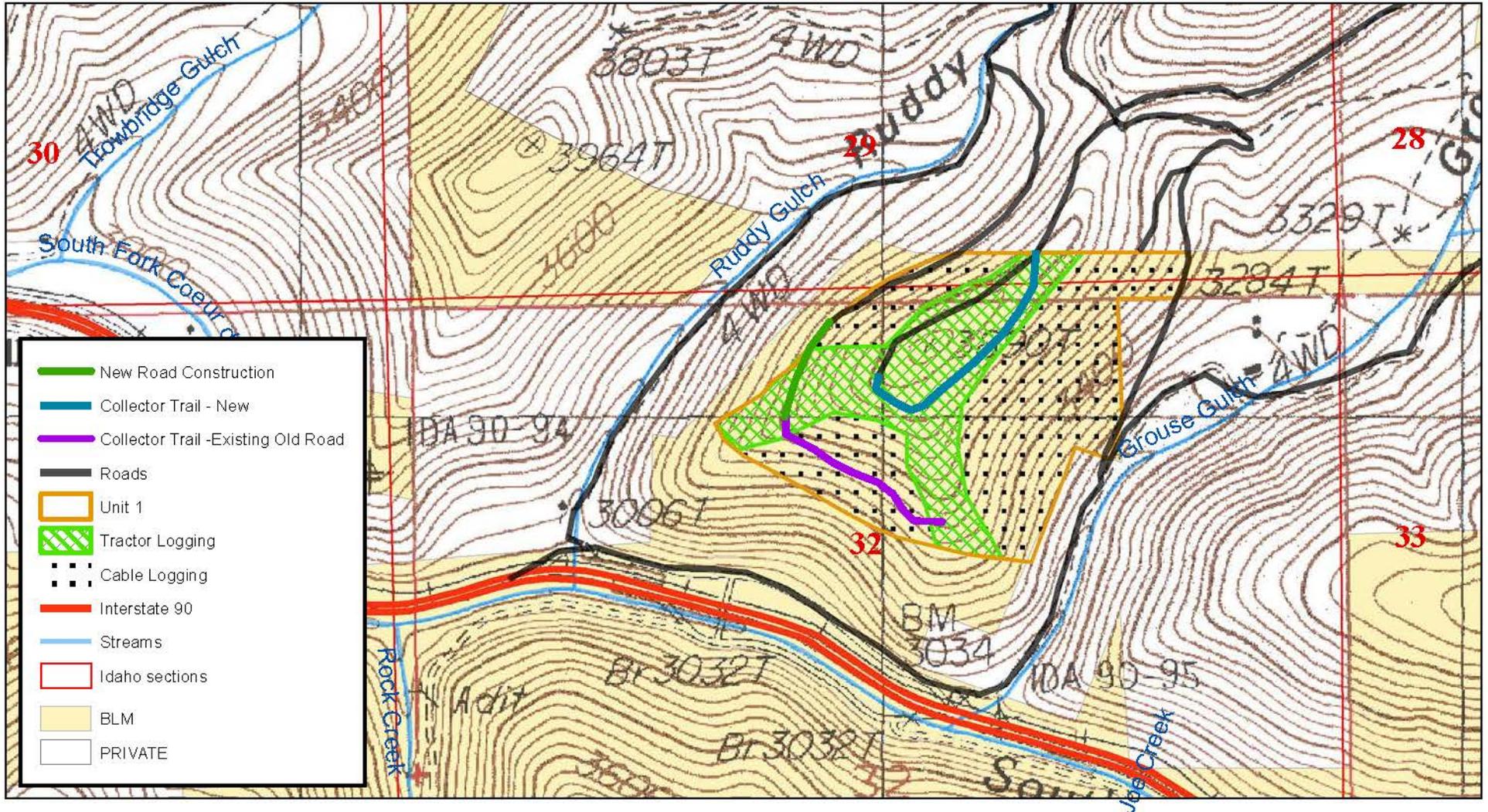
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Attachment 3-Road Construction

T48N R5E Sections 29 and 32

Grouse Island Forest Management



Map Created: 1/25/2013

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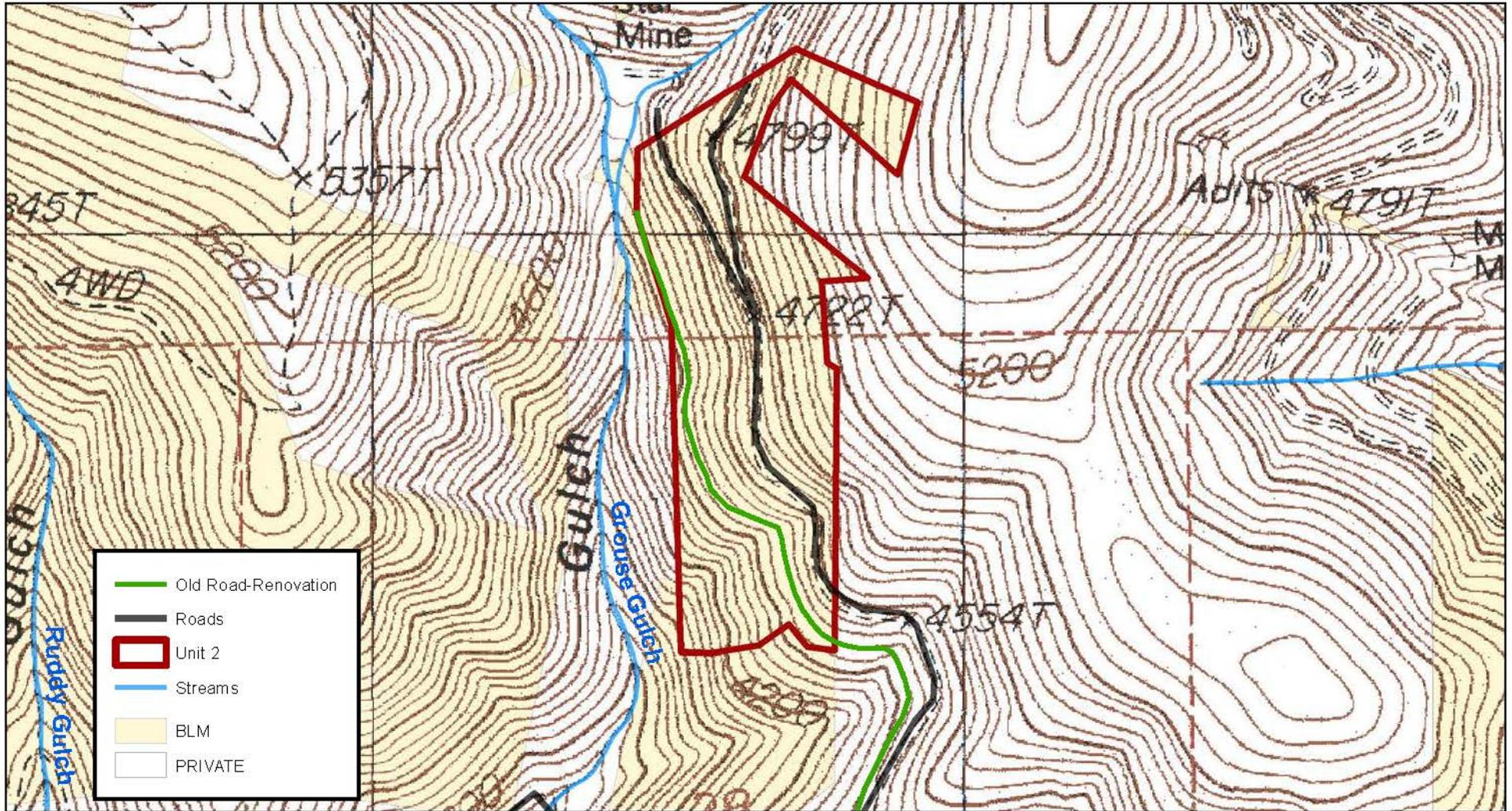
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Appendix 4-Road Renovation

T48N R5E Sections 21 and 28

Grouse Island Forest Management



Map Created: 1/25/2013

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