



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glennallen Field Office
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<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. BACKGROUND

Project Name / Type: Cordwood Salvage Sales

NEPA Register Number: DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2013-0014-CX

Case File Number: n/a

Location / Legal Description: Tielkel Block, Mileposts 37-72 Richardson Highway.
T2S R1E SEC. 16, 21, 28 & 31.
T3S R1E SEC. 5, 8, 17, 20 & 43.
T4S R1E SEC. 3-5, 8-10, 14-17, 21-27, 34-36.
T4S R2E SEC. 30 & 31.
T5S R1E SEC. 1, 2, 11-14, 22-28, 31-35.
T5S R2E SEC. 5-8, 18-19.
T6S R1W SEC. 12, 13, 24 & 25.
T6S R1E SEC. 4-8, 17-20, 29-33.
T7S R1W SEC. 13, 14, 22-27, 31-36.
T7S R1E SEC. 4-9, 17-20.
T8S R1W SEC. 2-9.

Applicant (if any): BLM

Description of Proposed Action: Timber Salvage

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Glennallen Field Office, as part of its forest management program, will offer 5 independent salvage contracts, each for 50 cords of firewood in the Tielkel Block beginning spring of 2013. The BLM proposes these forest development projects to salvage some of the volumes of beetle-killed *Picea glauca* (white spruce) from the insect epidemic of the 1990s. These salvage activities will be structured to respond to numerous requests by new small operators looking to fill the local demand for fuelwood.

The total of annual acreage impacted from these salvage operations is approximately 150 acres, with an approximate total volume harvested of 500 cords of firewood. Local public demand for

commercial firewood and wood products has remained steady. Regal Enterprises, the only established local mill operator which has continued to supply firewood, has recently ceased operations and supply of forest products and firewood to the surrounding communities.

These BLM cordwood salvage contracts will be in effect for a period of 18 months, with harvest activities occurring during winter months when adequate snow cover and subzero temperatures will reduce ground disturbance. All trees with a six-inch diameter (DBH) will be severed and removed. No permanent roads will be authorized under this proposed timber sale. Access roads developed under this proposed harvest will consist of temporary winter roads.

Slash and tops will be scattered and left on site in piles no higher than two feet in height. Successional forest growth is desired, with stands of *Salix* (willow), species along with slower growing hardwoods and white spruce. Successional forest growth is a critical factor for the development of suitable wildlife habitat.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Applicable Land Use Plan: East Alaska Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, September 2007

The proposed action is in conformance with the plan even though it is not specifically provided for because it is clearly consistent with the following planning decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

G. FOREST AND WOODLAND VEGETATION, AND FOREST PRODUCTS

G-1: Goals

- Maintain and restore the health, productivity, and biological diversity of forest and woodland ecosystems.
- Consistent with other resource values, provide personal use wood products for local consumption and opportunities for commercial harvests.

G-2: Objectives (Desired Conditions)

- **Timber stands managed for commercial production of white spruce:** These stands occur on floodplains and alluvial terraces on well-drained soils. Where accessible, these stands would be managed to maintain white spruce as the dominant tree species, which may require thinning to minimize early seral competition from other species. Beetle-kill trees within these stands would be salvaged where possible as firewood or house logs. This desired condition would be an objective for a maximum of 10 percent of the approximately 144,000 acres in the area considered suitable for commercial harvest.

In addition, the following objectives were identified for the approximately 144,000 acres identified as suitable for timber harvest (see Map 4, page 66):

- Increase access for personal and commercial wood products.
- Improve forest health through salvage of bark beetle-kill spruce.

- Consider potential for commercial harvest.
- Benefit wildlife habitat.
- Manage for desired conditions described above.
- Reduce hazardous fuels.

G-3: Management Actions

5. Provide wood products as a benefit of forest and woodland treatments when feasible and in consideration of other resource concerns.

7. The following Required Operating Procedures will be applied to forest treatments, as applicable: ROP-Veg-a, ROP-Veg-a-1, ROP-Veg-a-2, ROP-Veg-a-3, ROP-Veg-a-5, ROP-Veg-a-7, ROP-Veg-b-1, ROP-Veg-b-3, ROP-Veg-b-4, ROP-F&W-a-9, and ROP-F&W-a-3.

C. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with United States Department of the Interior 43 CFR 46.210 or United States Department of the Interior Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11, which provides:

C. Forestry

8. Salvaging dead or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction. Such activities:

- May include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.
- May include temporary roads which are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the BLM transportation system and not necessary for long-term resource management. Temporary roads shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources; and
- Shall require the treatment of temporary roads constructed or used so as to permit the reestablishment, by artificial or natural means, of vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover was disturbed by the construction or use of the road, as necessary to minimize erosion from the disturbed area. Such treatment shall be designed to reestablish vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.
- For this CX, a dying tree is defined as a standing tree that has been severely damaged by forces such as fire, wind, ice, insects, or disease, and that in the judgment of an experienced forest professional or someone technically trained for the work, is likely to die within a few years. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Harvesting a portion of a stand damaged by a wind or ice event.
 - Harvesting fire damaged trees.

D. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

The proposed action must be screened against the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 43 CFR § 46.215 (listed below). Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES	YES/NO
1. Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety.	No
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; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	No
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].	No
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
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.	No
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.	No
9. Violate Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).	No
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).	No

E. SIGNATURE

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 FM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that no further environmental analysis is required.

Beth Maclean
Glennallen Field Manager

Date

Attachments

Cordwood Salvage Special Provisions

Cordwood Salvage Sale Special Provisions

Your authorization to cut timber is subject to the following special provisions. The intent is to promote reforestation, prevent erosion, protect water quality, and to avoid damage to other resources and the environment. All hardwoods and live spruce with a DBH of 6 inches or smaller shall be left untouched.

HARVEST OPERATIONS:

1. A written harvest operation plan shall be submitted to the Authorized Officer. Harvest shall not begin until the plan has been reviewed and approved. The plan shall include proposed logging methods, sequence of operations, and location of skid trails and landings.
2. Before beginning operations on the contract area for the first time or after a shut down of 14 days or more, the purchaser shall notify the Authorized Officer.
3. All harvesting operations will take place during periods when the ground is frozen with at least eight (8) inches of snow cover.
4. The harvest of timber under this contract will be accomplished with the use of conventional logging equipment. The use of crawler type equipment, wheeled skidders, and feller buncher harvesters are permitted.
5. All landing and skid trails shall be located within the boundaries of the harvest area.
6. No new permanent roads or trails will be constructed. Only temporary access trails are permitted. During the harvest operations, the purchaser shall keep all roads and power line rights of ways free of trees and other debris.
7. Stumps shall be left no higher than eight (8) inches above the forest floor.
8. Slash and unused portions of harvested trees shall be cut up and scattered and left no higher than 12 inches above the ground.
9. Sub-merchantable material that is damaged during the harvesting operation will be felled, lopped and scattered.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:

1. The disturbance or destruction of any eagle, eagle egg, nest tree, and/or eagle nest is prohibited. If you locate a suspected eagle nest, report it to the

Authorized Officer. All activities in the vicinity of the nest must stop until you are given authorization to continue. All other birds of prey (including hawks, falcons, and owls), their nests, eggs, and young are similarly protected.

2. If during the harvest operation the purchaser or the employees of the purchaser discovers or becomes aware of any objects or sites of cultural value in the contract area, the Purchaser shall immediately suspend all activities and notify the Authorized Officer. Sites of cultural value include: historical or pre-historical ruins, graves or grave markers, fossils, or artifacts. Operations may resume at the discovery site upon receipt of written instructions from the Authorized Officer.

Other Stipulations:

1. All trucks and other equipment used by the purchaser and employees shall be in safe condition so as to meet the minimum safety standards required by state and federal regulations.
2. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) reserves the right to cancel this contract at any time. Failure to follow the conditions of this contract may cause its cancellations and/or non-renewal.
3. The permittee will be responsible for preventing spills of oil, fuel, lubricants, or any other potentially hazardous substance while operating within the sale area. If any spill or release of hazardous materials occurs, the permittee will be responsible for any cleanup or remediation required as determined by the authorized officer.

I have read and agree to abide by these stipulations:

Signed

Date