

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

DECISION RECORD
Nut Basin Road Blowdown
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2015-0004-CX

1. Background

Wind-thrown and wildfire weakened trees are adjacent to, and blocking a major travel route through 1.25 miles of BLM managed lands enroute to Forest Service Road #441, located approximately 2 miles south of Slate Creek, Idaho (see attached maps). The fire weakened trees; a direct result of the 2012 Sheep wildfire, experienced a high wind event in early February 2015 causing approximately sixty (60) merchantable sawlog trees to snap off and/or completely uproot and fall over the Nut Basin Road. In addition, along the 1.25 mile BLM corridor, there are approximately 150 to 200 trees located within falling distance of reaching the road that are dead and currently dying from the effects of fire latent bark beetle activity. This gravel surfaced road is a major travel route into the Nez Perce/Clearwater Forest and is heavily used by the public. Prompt removal and salvage of this downed material and storm damaged standing hazard trees is highly recommended; mainly because of public safety concerns, the potential for a bark beetle epidemic, and fuels reduction treating fire hazard adjacent to this road. This stand salvage treatment action, as outlined in the goals and objectives of the Cottonwood Management Plan (RMP), supports expediting salvage to capture economic return in stands that are susceptible to or have outbreaks of forest insect or disease and/or mortality related to wildland fire.

2. Decision

It is my decision to implement the proposed project as described above and in the attached Categorical Exclusion document; salvage removal of wind-thrown and roadside hazard trees within approximately 4 acres of land managed by the BLM, Cottonwood Field Office in Idaho County, Idaho. This forest management salvage activity will be accomplished by removing hazard trees at risk to public safety along this well-travelled forest access road. No new roads will be constructed.

3. Authority

This is a forest management decision in accordance with 43 CFR 5000.

4. Rationale

This action is an opportunity to reduce the potential hazards to public safety and further reduce forest stand insect and disease related impacts adjacent to this major forest access

road, while meeting the goals and objectives addressed in the RMP. Also, as determined in the attached Categorical Exclusion Documentation, there is no potential for significant impacts.

5. Coordination and Consultation

The Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho County Commissioners, Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest Slate Creek District, and the local Idaho County Road Department.

6. Protest and Appeal

This forest management decision may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. This decision record constitutes the decision document for the purpose of protests. Protests of this decision must be filed with this office within fifteen days after the date of this decision record. As interpreted by the BLM, the regulations do not authorize the acceptance of protests in any form other than a signed, written hard copy that is delivered to the physical address of the BLM Cottonwood Field Office:

Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
ATTN: Nut Basin Road Blowdown
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

/s/	4/16/15
_____	_____
William Runnoe	Date
Field Manager	

Attachments:

- 1) Categorical Exclusion Documentation
- 2) Map 1 Project Vicinity
- 3) Map 2 Proposed Salvage Removal Areas

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Categorical Exclusion Documentation
Nut Basin Road Blowdown
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1. Description of the Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Cottonwood Field Office is proposing salvage removal of wind-thrown and wildfire weakened trees on approximately 4 acres that are adjacent to, and blocking a major travel route through 1.25 miles of BLM managed lands enroute to Forest Service Road #441. The fire weakened trees; a direct result of the 2012 Sheep wildfire, experienced a high wind event in early February 2015 causing approximately sixty (60) merchantable sawlog trees to snap off and/or completely uproot and fall over the Nut Basin Road. In addition, along the 1.25 mile BLM corridor, there are approximately 150 to 200 trees located within falling distance of reaching the road that are dead and currently dying from the effects of fire latent bark beetle activity. This gravel surfaced road is a major travel route into the NezPerce/Clearwater Forest and is heavily used by the public. Prompt removal and salvage of this downed material and storm damaged standing hazard trees is highly recommended; mainly because of public safety concerns, the potential for a bark beetle outbreak epidemic, and fuels reduction to reduce fire risk adjacent to this road.

Removal and salvage of this material will be accomplished this spring (April/May 2015), through a small salvage sale contract, likely sold to a local logging contractor. Most all of this material can be removed by equipment operating directly on the road surface, or utilizing existing roadside skid trail approaches. The resulting slash material (limbs, tops, and damaged chunks), will be machine piled below the fill slope and disposed of by burning when fire danger levels are low. As surplus conifer seedlings become available, this narrow strip (wind-throw area) between the State IDL ownership and the Nut Basin Road will be planted/reforested to meet stocking levels of two-hundred (200) trees per acre.

2. Location

Idaho County, Idaho, Boise Meridian, T. 26N., R. 2E.,
Sec. 8, NE¹/₄, NE¹/₄SE¹/₄;
Sec. 9, NW¹/₄SW¹/₄.

3. 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 Cottonwood Management Plan (RMP), approved December 21, 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

Goal VF-1—Manage forests to maintain or improve forest health, composition, structure, and diversity consistent with site potential, and Historical Range of Variability.

Objective VF-1.2—In areas not included in Objective 1 (DFC blocks identified on **Map**, Desired Future Condition Blocks) manage for multiple resource values that include but are not limited to habitat management, grazing, etc.

Action VF-1.2.3—In the stands described in Action VF-1.2.2, if outbreaks of insect or disease, or mortality related to wildland fire or other disturbance, threaten the structure, silvicultural treatments may be applied that reduce potential mortality. These treatments will attempt to maximize retention of the structure while minimizing loss due to the disturbance.

Goal FP-1—Provide forest products to help meet local and national demands.

Objective FP-1.3—Prioritize vegetation treatment projects that will maximize forest commodity recovery.

Action FP-1.3.1—In forest stands that are susceptible to or have outbreaks of forest insect or disease, or have mortality related to wildland fire, expedite salvage to capture economic return.

4. 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(2): Sale and removal of individual trees or small groups of trees which are dead, diseased, injured, or which constitute a safety hazard, and where access for the removal requires no more than maintenance to existing roads. 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.

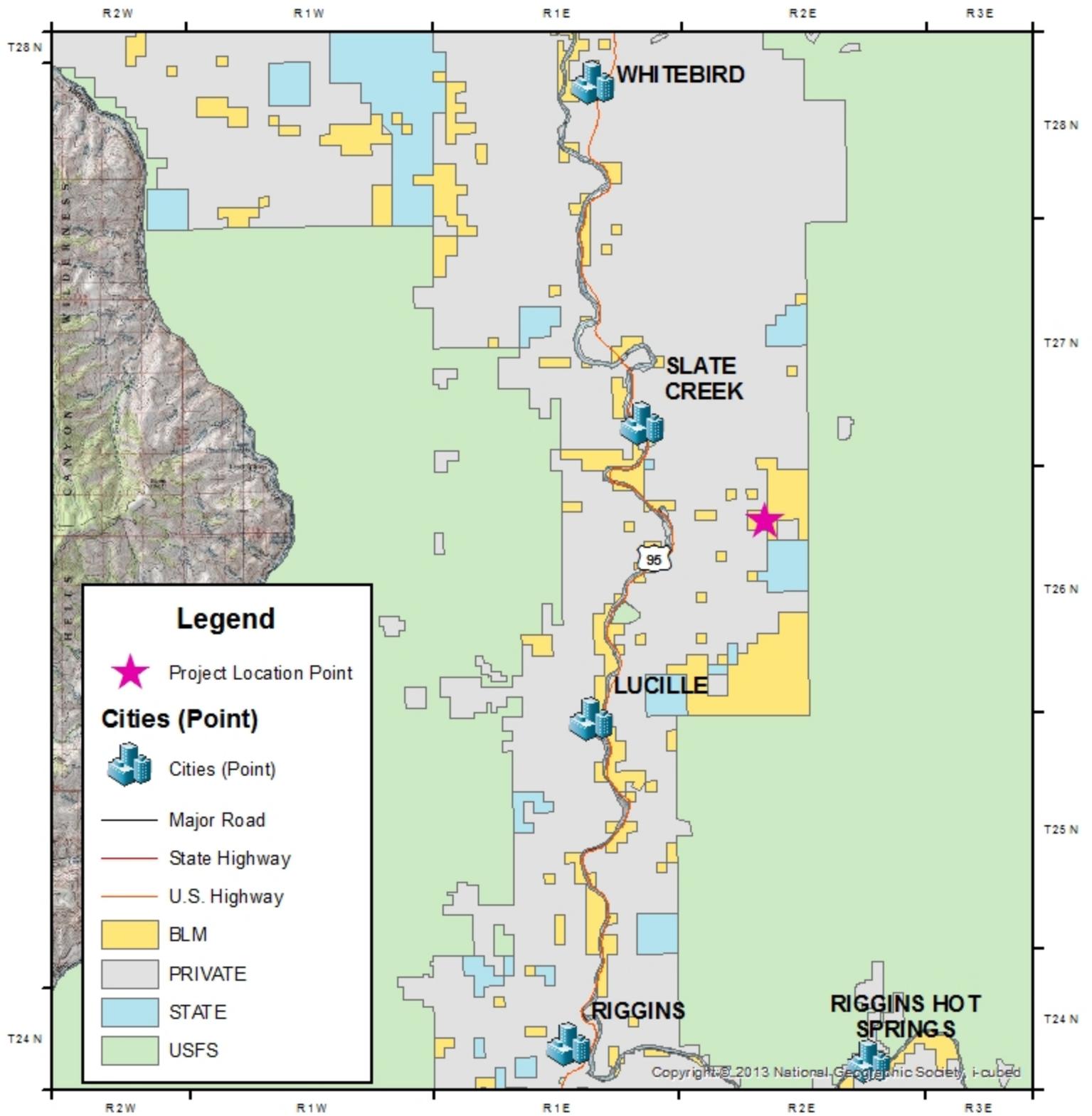
/s/

Will Runnoe
Field Manager

4/16/15

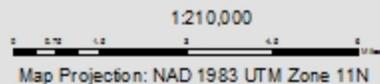
Date

Nut Basin Road Blowdown Vicinity Map



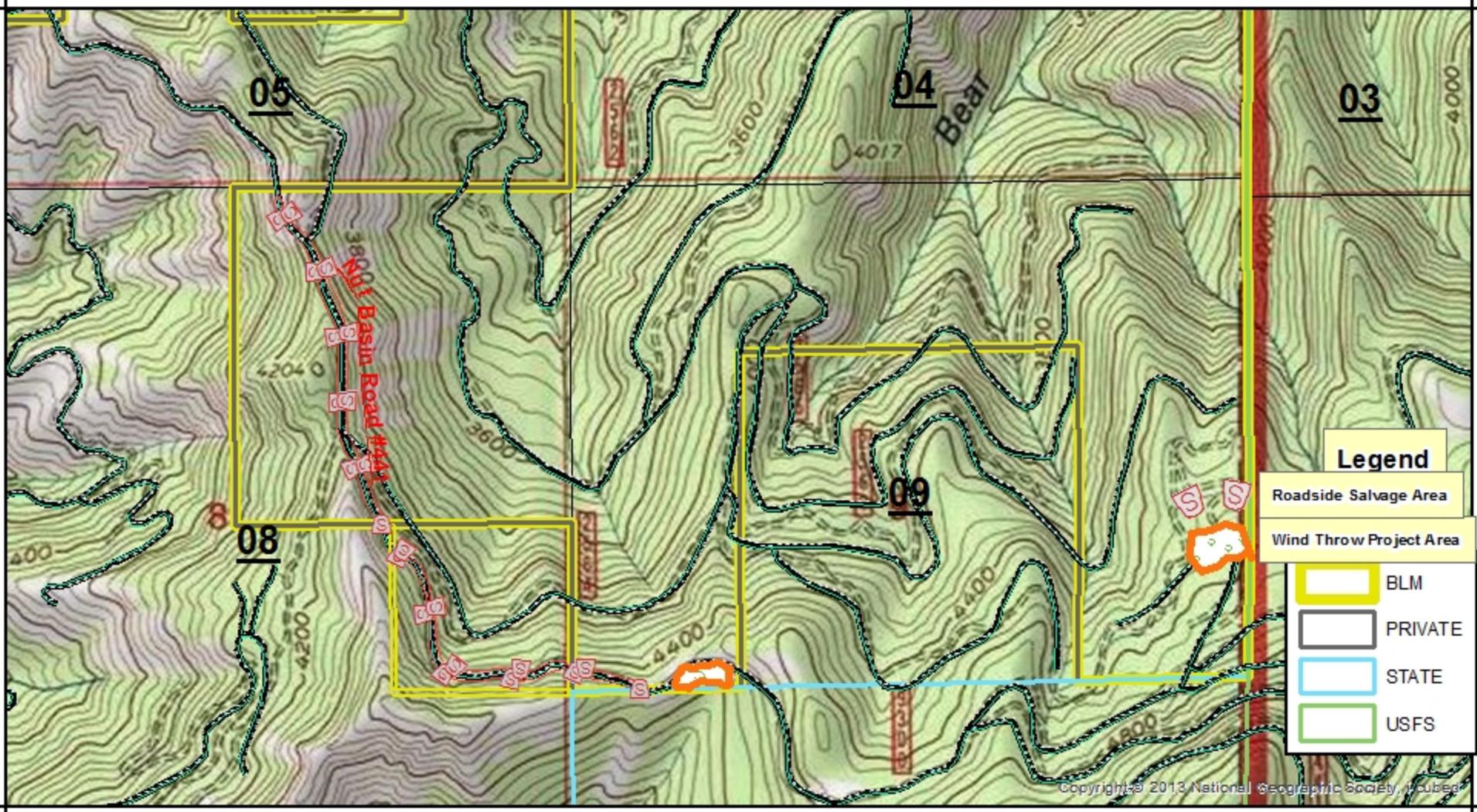
The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

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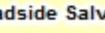
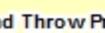


Nut Basin Road Blowdown

R 2 E



Legend

-  Roadside Salvage Area
-  Wind Throw Project Area
-  BLM
-  PRIVATE
-  STATE
-  USFS

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R 2 E



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Map Created 6/19/2016

