

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Idaho 83530

Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) Worksheet

2015 Sheep Fire Blowdown Salvage

DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2015-0005-DNA

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The Cottonwood Field Office is proposing to salvage approximately 20 to 30 log truck loads of sawtimber that were blown down during a wind event that occurred within the project area of the previous Sheep Fire Timber Salvage. Within localized areas the wind event uprooted and snapped off portions of live trees that were designated as leave trees by the Sheep Fire Timber Salvage project. Blowdown concentrations occur within units 1, 5-A-1, 5-A-2, 5-A-3, 5-B-2, and 5-B-3 as identified within the Sheep Fire Timber Salvage environmental assessment (EA) (June, 2013), (see attached Map). Harvesting within this portion of the project area was completed in 2013-2014 as part of the Wet Gulch Salvage Contract (IDC02-TS-2013.0004). The proposed timber salvage would utilize the same harvest methods (ground based and/or cable) as specified in the original EA (see map). Salvage operations would occur along existing roads (no decommissioned roads will be utilized) and all logs will be skidded/yarded to the existing road system. All applicable design features and mitigations identified in the EA (see Appendix A), would be followed during the proposed salvage operation.

B. Location

Idaho County, Idaho. Township 26 North, Range 2 East, Section 30, 31 and 32. Blowdown concentrations are found within portions of Units 1, 5-A-1, 5-A-2, 5-A-3, 5-B-2, and 5-B-3 as identified in the Sheep Fire Timber Salvage EA (2013).

C. 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 Record of Decision and Approved Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP), approved 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

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

Objective FP-1.1—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.

D. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Documents

The following NEPA document covers the proposed action:

Sheep Fire Timber Salvage EA (DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2013-0003-EA) BLM, June 2013.

E. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

- 1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?*

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, the current proposal is essentially similar to the selected alternative analyzed in the referenced EA. The new proposal occurs on the same harvest acres as are covered in the EA utilizing the existing transportation system. The only difference in conditions is that fewer live trees are now standing in the previously harvested areas. A certain amount of mortality was anticipated in the silvicultural prescription. However, the timing and concentrated nature of the windthrow event facilitated an economic recovery of material that would otherwise not exist. As the Sheep Fire occurred in 2012, active surface erosion attributed to the wildfire would be substantially less with the majority of erosion occurring within the first year. With the exception of the above described conditions, the primary resource conditions are similar to what was described in the existing NEPA document and are not substantial compared to what would occur with natural recovery from a wildfire and salvage logging.

- 2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?*

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, the No Action alternative and No New Temporary Road Construction Alternative were analyzed in the Sheep Fire Timber Salvage EA completed in June 2013. Both alternatives included the area of blowdown, including the Proposed Action-Preferred Alternative chosen in the DR.

- 3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?*

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, there is no new information or circumstances that would invalidate the existing analysis as it applies to the currently proposed salvage of wind-thrown trees. A storm event that occurred on August , 2013, resulted in landslides and debris torrents which severely scoured the East Fork of John Day Creek, South Fork of John Day Creek, and upper John Day Creek. The debris torrents and landslides were attributed to natural post-fire events and occurred prior to any BLM salvage logging activities. Federal and State Regulatory agencies were contacted regarding this storm event and effects that occurred within the John Day Creek drainage. The above event would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action. Salvage logging of wind-thrown trees would not occur in any riparian conservation areas (RCAs), landslide prone areas, change any subwatershed equivalent clearcut area (ECA) conditions, and would be expected to result in discountable erosion or sediment delivery to any stream channel. No changes to deposited sediment are expected to occur in any fish-bearing stream channel from implementation of the new proposed action.

4. *Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?*

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, they are essentially the same. The transportation system analyzed in the existing NEPA document was the major issue analyzed for direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. The current proposal uses only existing roads with no new road construction or reopening of decommissioned roads. Harvest methods will be the same as those analyzed previously with all related design features and mitigation measures utilized. Any direct, indirect, and cumulative effects resulting from the new proposed action are similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document. Implementation of the proposed action would not result in additional adverse cumulative effects with the identified design features.

5. *Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?*

Documentation of answer and explanation: Yes, the proposed action analyzed in the Sheep Fire Timber Salvage EA (2013) was subject to public and interagency scoping and review and tribal consultation. No substantive new issues would require additional review, including review under the National Historic Preservation Act or the Endangered Species Act.

Persons/Organizations Consulted

Consultation during the development of the original EA was sufficient and no new consultation was needed for this proposed action.

F. Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM’s compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

/s/

6/1/15

Will Runnoe
Field Manager

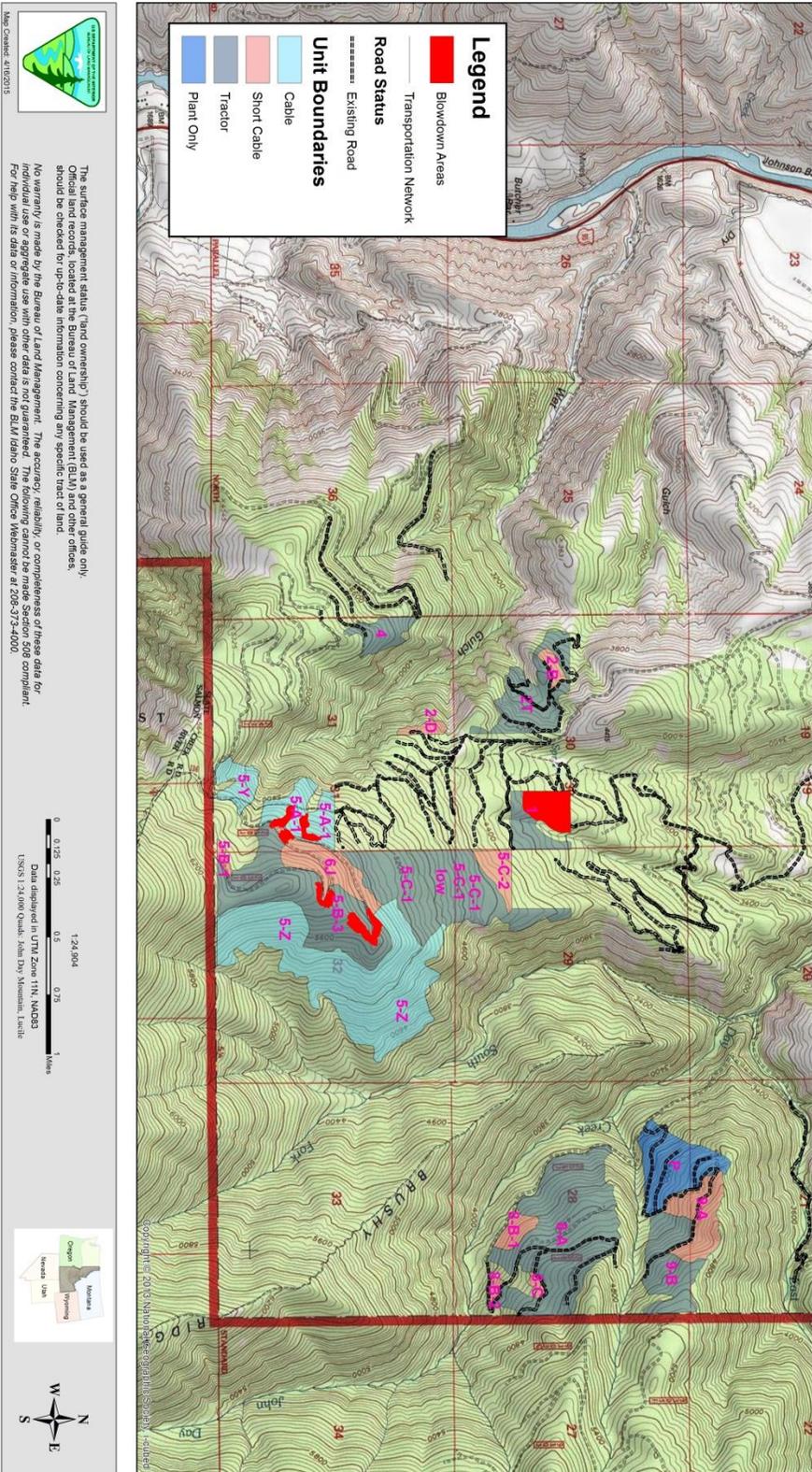
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Photo 1: Portion of project area with wind-thrown trees proposed for salvage.



Map 1: Project Area

2015 Sheep Fire Salvage Blowdown Project Area



Appendix A

Environmental Design Features (Applied from Sheep Fire Timber Salvage EA)

All treatments in the proposed action and the No Temporary Road Alternative would follow established agency management plans, policies, and procedures, including the Idaho Forest Practices Act (Idaho Administrative Code, Title 38, Chapter 13). The following design features would be implemented to avoid or minimize potential impacts to resources:

Air Quality (Smoke Management)

- Conduct prescribed fires in accordance with the procedures outlined in the *Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group Operating Guide* (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2010) in order to minimize air quality impacts from smoke on local communities and individuals.
- Employ dust abatement measures on roads to reduce fugitive dust.

Forest Vegetation

- Develop silvicultural prescriptions in accordance with the Cottonwood RMP, Appendix C, Desired Future Conditions for Forest Vegetation/Wildlife Habitat (USDI-BLM 2009). Develop slash treatment and burn guidelines to meet desired stand conditions of species composition, structure, and watershed sediment guidelines.

Soils and Water Resources

- Prohibit timber harvest in areas of high landslide hazard as determined by resource specialists.
- Modify, via site-specific mitigation measure(s), timber harvest or temporary road construction in areas of moderate landslide hazard as needed to protect slope stability. Examples would include, but not be limited to, requiring partial suspension on cable logging; and/or constructing and applying mulch or slash on yarding corridors where bare soil is exposed.
- Restrict tractor skidding operations to the use of a tracked tractor (or low compaction rubber tire skidders -see EA administrative record for allowance of low compaction rubber tire skidders as data established that compaction from certain low compaction rubber tire skidders can be equal to or less than tracked skidders).
- Restrict activities when soils are wet to prevent resource damage (indicators include excessive rutting, soil displacement, and erosion).
- Construct slash filter windrows at the toe of fill slopes on newly constructed landings and roads concurrent with construction. Limit height of windrows to 3 feet. Provide breaks and limit length of windrow to allow easy passage of wildlife.
- Reduce road surface erosion by rocking the approach and departure of existing stream crossings as needed.
- Prepare and implement a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan (40 CFR 112) that incorporates the rules and requirements of the Idaho Forest Practices Act Section 60, Use of Chemicals and Petroleum Products; and US Department of Transportation rules for fuel haul and temporary storage; and additional direction as applicable. Erosion control measures including removal of log culverts and construction

of temporary cross drains, drainage ditches, dips, or berms will be required on all temporary roads before operations cease annually.

- Scarify non-excavated skid trails and landings that are compacted or entrenched 3 inches or more.
- Scarify and re-contour excavated skid trails and landings to restore slope hydrology and soil productivity.
- In the event of winter logging activities, snow plowing will maintain a minimum of two inches of snow on the road, leave ditches and culverts functional, side cast material will not include dirt and gravel, and berms will not be left on road shoulders unless drainage holes are opened and maintained.
- Buffer Riparian Conservation Areas from mechanical treatment.
- In the event an unknown seep, spring, or watercourse is discovered, apply Riparian Conservation Area buffers. .
- Place slash and woody debris as needed within cable logging corridors to inhibit erosion.
- Rip and/or mulch compacted areas (i.e., log landings) to inhibit them from generating overland flow and surface erosion, and maximizing their infiltration rate. Mulch may be straw or other materials and should provide at least 65 % soil cover, particularly in areas burned at high severity.
- Orient linear features created by logging operations, such as skid trails and cable rows, across slope to the maximum extent possible to inhibit any creation of new channels. Ensure waterbars are installed diagonally to skid trails and are larger than normal to promote enhanced inhibition of overland flow.
- Locate skid trails and landings prior to cutting operations, to minimize the delivery of surface runoff and sediment to the nearest stream channel, especially in areas burned at high and moderate severity. To the extent possible, harvest units should be located upslope of unburned areas or areas burned at a lower severity.

Invasive, Non-Native Species

- Treat existing noxious weed infestations along access roads prior to project implementation.
- Clean all off-road equipment of soil, plant parts, seeds, and other debris before entering the treatment units.
- Ensure all rock used for road surfacing is free of noxious weed seed. Borrow pits and stockpiles will not be used if it is determined they are infested with undesirable invasive plants.
- Inventory disturbed areas for new weed introductions and implement weed control treatments 1-year post project and followed up for a second year if staff and funding is available.
- Ensure any mulch or seed products used will be certified as noxious weed free.
- Revegetate, as needed, disturbed areas with an approved seed mix. If desired species in the mix are not available, substitutions may be made upon approval from the Cottonwood Field Office. Ensure the seed mix is certified noxious weed free. Target areas will be permanent and temporary roads, road rehabilitation areas, log landing areas, and severely disturbed cable corridors and skid trails.
- Accomplish seeding the first spring or fall after disturbance.

Table 4. Revegetation Seed Mix

Common Name	Scientific Name	Lbs./Acre
Mountain Brome (Bromar)	<i>Bromus marginatus</i>	2
Blue Wild Rye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	3
Streambank Wheatgrass (Sodar)	<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i>	3
Tufted Hairgrass	<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	0.5
Annual Rye	<i>Lolium perenne ssp multiflorum</i>	1
Big Bluegrass (Sherman)	<i>Poa ampla</i>	1
Western Yarrow	<i>Achillea millifolium</i>	0.25
TOTAL		10.75

- All weed herbicide treatment will occur in accordance with the ROD for the Cottonwood Integrated Weed Treatment Program, DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2011-0017-EA available for review at the Cottonwood Field Office.

Wildlife

- Retain snags and snag replacement green trees and use coarse woody debris in accordance with the Cottonwood RMP, Appendix C, Desired Future Conditions for Forest Vegetation/Wildlife Habitat.
- Maintain existing motorized vehicle restrictions within the area for wildlife security purposes. Do not allow contractors or their representatives to hunt or trap while accessing federal lands using motorized vehicles on restricted routes. Use signs where needed to prohibit public use of roads that are closed to motorized public use, but open for logging use. Use signs where needed to prohibit public use of closed roads that are used for logging.
- Provide a 450 foot non-disturbance and non-treatment buffer (10-15 acres) around occupied nests for BLM sensitive raptor species. Provide a 300 foot buffer around occupied nest for all other raptors. Buffer size may be modified upon review by BLM Biologist depending on potential for disturbance from an activity or project.
- Follow the requirements of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act; BLM ID IB2010-039 (Seasonal Wildlife Restrictions and Procedures for Processing Requests for Exceptions on Public Lands in Idaho); and the 2008 US Fish and Wildlife Service Guidelines for Raptor Conservation in the Western United States.

Seasonal restrictions for potentially disruptive construction or other human activities, will generally apply for raptors from February 1 through July 31 unless an exception is granted by the BLM field office manager. Temporary exceptions can be granted in situations where the raptor nest has been destroyed (e.g., by wind, wildfire, lightning), or is not currently active (i.e., young have fledged or if the nest is unused in the current nesting season). Exceptions or temporal deviations from the established February 1 - July 31 timeframe may also be granted based on species, variations in nesting chronology of particular species locally, topographic considerations (e.g., intervening ridge between construction activities and a nest) or other factors that are biologically reasonable. Biologists should review the Bald Eagle Management Guidelines, Draft Guidelines for Raptor Conservation in the Western United States, and Interim Golden Eagle Technical Guidance documents for additional details and protocols.

Aquatic and Riparian Habitat

- Prohibit log landings within RCAs.
- Prohibit fuel storage, equipment maintenance, or fueling within RCAs.
- Prohibit timber harvest and temporary road construction within RCAs. Prohibit removal of large woody debris within RCAs.
- Prohibit use of hexazinone herbicide within 200 feet of watercourses.

Threatened and Endangered, and Sensitive Species

- Notify BLM Biologist of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species sightings made by BLM employees or contractors. If needed apply appropriate conservation measures to minimize impacts to these species.