

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

## **DECISION RECORD**

Hazard Creek Fire Salvage Project  
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2015-0013-CX

### **1. Background**

The Cottonwood Field Office, Coeur d'Alene District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes a post fire salvage and reforestation project within approximately 140 acres of BLM lands occurring in the Hazard Creek drainage (see attached maps). The Tepee Springs Fire was detected on August 12, 2015 following a lightning event in the area of Tepee Springs and Hazard Creek approximately 20 miles south of Riggins in Idaho County, Idaho. The fire spread north of the Lower Salmon River and eventually burned over 95,700 acres. Land ownership within the Tepee Springs Fire includes private lands, BLM, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), and USDA Forest Service lands. From aerial photos after the fire, it is estimated that 580 acres of commercial BLM timber was burned in the Hazard Creek and Hard Creek drainages. Based on existing roads, terrain limitations, and fire severity, an estimated 140 acres of BLM managed lands has been recommended for timber salvage with portions of this area needing reforestation to meet stocking levels designated in the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (2009).

### **2. Decision**

It is my decision to implement the proposed project as described above and in the attached Categorical Exclusion document; timber salvage and road-side hazard tree removal, slash piling at landings, and seedling planting on 70 acres of land managed by the BLM, Cottonwood Field Office. These forest management activities will be accomplished by mechanical harvest of fire killed or dying trees and conifer planting of desirable species (early seral) as needed within the project area to move toward Desired Future Conditions (DFC's) as described in the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2009).

### **3. Authority**

This is a forest management decision in accordance with 43 CFR 5000, and it supports the goals of the Cottonwood Management Plan (RMP), approved December 2009.

**4. Rationale**

This action is an opportunity to promote public safety along roads through hazard tree removal, to reduce the potential for insect and disease related impacts, and move these areas towards the Desired Future Condition standards 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, Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Conservation league, and adjacent land owners have been sent written notification of this proposed project.

**6. Protest and Appeal**

The decision to implement this forest management project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. As outlined in 43 CFR 5003 (a) and (b), protests of a forest management decision may be made within 15 days of receipt of the written decision notice via mail and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.

Bureau of Land Management  
Cottonwood Field Office  
ATTN: Hazard Creek Salvage Project  
1 Butte Drive  
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

Regulations do not authorize acceptance of the BLM of protests in any form other than a signed, paper document that is delivered to the physical address of the BLM office within the 15-day period. Therefore, e-mail, verbal, or facsimile protests will not be accepted.

/s/

9/30/15

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Runnoe  
Field Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attachments: Categorical Exclusion Documentation

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
*Cottonwood Field Office*  
*1 Butte Drive*  
*Cottonwood, ID 83522*

**Categorical Exclusion Documentation**

*Hazard Creek Fire Salvage Project*  
DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2015-0013-CX

**Description of the Proposed Action**

The Cottonwood Field Office, Coeur d'Alene District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing a post fire salvage and reforestation project on land affected by the Tepee Springs Fire on BLM lands within the Hazard Creek drainage. The timber salvage would involve removal of fire-killed and fire-damaged trees on 140 acres. The proposed salvage areas consist primarily of Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Trees identified for removal by a Forester or other trained individual are determined to be dead or likely to die within 1-3 years. Sixteen acres of hazard tree would occur within a 200 foot corridor (within the 140 acre project area) along both sides of a road section that contains widely distributed fire killed/damaged trees that pose a threat to public safety. Reforestation would occur by planting of conifer seedlings (using early seral species) to meet stocking levels detailed in the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (2009) on approximately 70 acres within the project area. To facilitate salvage operations, 0.18 miles of road (a former logging haul road) would be reconstructed with improvements to meet haul road standards. The haul road would be restored to pre-project conditions at the termination of the project.

Proposed harvest methods include the use of cable (72 acres), tractor (35 acres) or jammer (33 acres). Green tree removal would be minimal and may include selective harvest within yarding corridors, skid trails, road clearing, and areas adjacent to landings to facilitate equipment access and ensure safe working conditions. Salvage harvest would not occur within Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Any tree felled within a RCA would be for safety concerns and the tree would be left on-site.

Landings would be placed on roadsides and would be limited to a maximum of 0.5 acre. Felled trees would be yarded to log landings where the tree tops and limbs would be removed. Following harvest, skid trails and landings would be rehabilitated by seeding and mulching. Berms would be re-contoured, and water bars would be installed. Where available, slash may be placed on skid trails to aid precipitation runoff dissipation and skid trail closure. Landing operations and timber hauling on rock surfaced roads would be permitted year round. Road conditions would be monitored and no road use would occur during periods when rutting would occur and potentially resulting in delivery of fine sediment to stream networks. To improve soil productivity, slash resulting from harvest operations would be retained in the units as much as feasible. Woody material from logging would be scattered on yarding corridors and roads, and where possible throughout the unit and on landings. High concentrations of slash on any landings would be piled and burned. All logging activities will utilize the Best Management Practices

(BMPs) identified in timber harvesting section in Appendix A of the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2009). Fire salvage logging activities would support achievement of the retention of desired range and amounts of snags and coarse wood debris within the general project area (Appendix C, Cottonwood RMP, 2009).

### **Location**

Proposed project is located in Idaho County

Township 21 North, Range 1 East, Sections 25 (SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ ), Section 1 (NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  N $\frac{1}{2}$ , SW $\frac{1}{4}$ ) and Section 2 (E $\frac{1}{2}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$ ).

### **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 RMP approved December 2009. It is consistent with the following decisions from the RMP:

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

**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.

**Action FP-1.2.1:** Develop silvicultural treatments that support DFC for those stands identified on Map 3, Desired Future Condition Blocks.

**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.

**Action FP-1.4.3:** All Final harvest and reforestation projects in commercial forest management areas will be designed to achieve full stocking on 90 percent of the area within 5 years.

**Action FP-1.4.4:** All activities normally associated with reforestation may be used including but not limited to, mechanical and chemical treatments, pest control, and prescribed burning.

### **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with **516 DM 11.9 C(8)** as follows:

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

- a. May include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.*

*b. 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*

*c. 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.*

*d. 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:*

*(i) Harvesting a portion of a stand damaged by a wind or ice event.*

*(ii) Harvesting fire damaged trees.*

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/

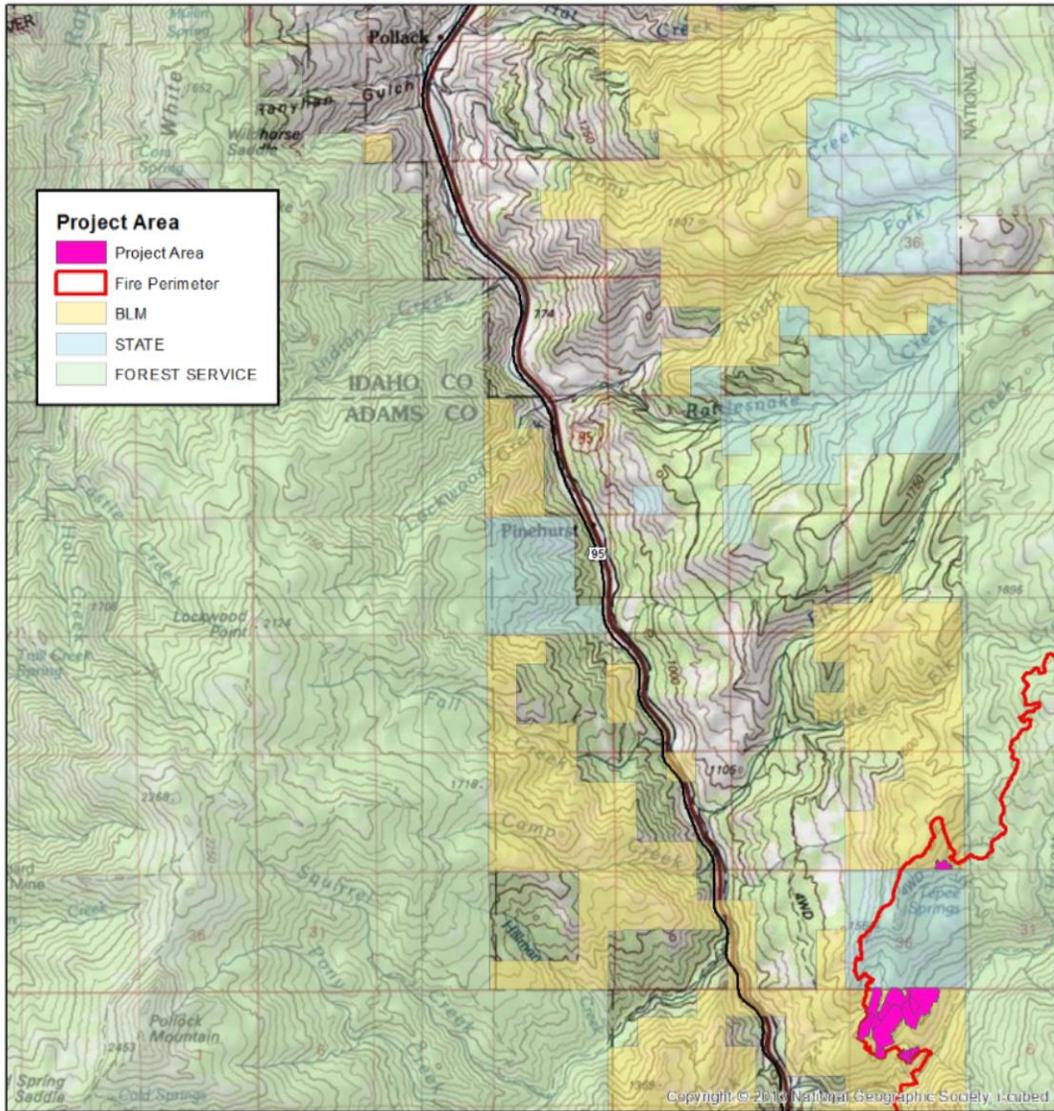
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Will Runnoe*  
Field Manager

9/30/15

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attachments (project and vicinity maps):  
Map 1. Vicinity Map

## Hazard Creek Salvage - Vicinity Cottonwood Field Office - BLM



 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.

Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

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0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

Montana  
Oregon



Map 2. Project Map

