

**NOTE: This Scoping/Information Package contains corrections made June 9, 2016**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Coeur d' Alene District, Cottonwood Field Office  
1 Butte Dr. Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

**SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE**

**Lolo 80 Salvage**

DOI-BLM-ID-C020-2016-0015-EA

June 9, 2016

**Introduction**

This information package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to salvage 49.6 acres of timber burned during the Clearwater Complex in accordance with 2009 Cottonwood Field Office Resources Management Plan (RMP). The fire burned approximately 47,260 acres including private, Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), USDA Forest Service and BLM managed lands. It is estimated that 5,900 acres of BLM managed lands burned. Within the 80-acre BLM managed parcel that contains the project area, there were approximately 17.7 acres of low severity, 36.5 acres of medium severity and 26 acres of high severity burn (see attached maps). The project area is also within the 1,625-acre Upper Lolo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Approximately 272.7 acres burned in this ACEC.

The project area is located upslope of Lolo Creek straddling the Lolo Creek Road between the communities of Woodland and Weippe, Idaho approximately 4.5 miles northeast of Kamiah, Idaho. Federal actions such as this one must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this report is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the NEPA review of the proposal. Analysis of the proposal is ongoing, and will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA). Comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and to identify alternatives to the proposed action that meet the purpose of and need for the project.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will also use this public participation opportunity under the NEPA to assist the agency in satisfying the public involvement requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. § 306108) pursuant to 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). The information about historic and cultural resources within the area

potentially affected by the proposed action will assist the BLM in identifying and evaluating impacts to such resources in the context of both NEPA and Section 106 of the NHPA.

The BLM will consult with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis in accordance with Executive Order 13175 and other policies. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action that the BLM is evaluating, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

### **Location**

Approximately 4.5 air miles northeast of Kamiah.

Idaho County, Idaho. Boise Meridian, T. 34N, R. 4E  
Section 17, (NE, NE and SE, SE)

See the attached location map.

### **Background**

The Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail pass through this parcel in a north-south orientation. The majority of trees adjacent to the trail have been killed by fire. National Historic Trail tread is evident the full length of the BLM administered parcel except where the modern road cuts through the trail. The trail tread is about two feet wide and six inches deep on the north and middle part of the parcel. On the south end of the parcel, where the terrain steepens, the trail switchbacks across the slope forming what looks like a trench. The trail tread in this area is two feet wide at the bottom of the trench and four to six feet wide at the top with the trail over three feet deep.

There have been past issues with trees blowing over and the roots upending and in some cases damaging the trail tread. Also, people have been cutting firewood on the site. Downed trees are being dragged over the trail to the nearby road. Unfortunately, some people have begun girdling live trees with a chainsaw to kill the tree and then fall the tree later in the year for firewood. Examples of these impacts are depicted in the photos as well as post fire photo of the trail. Because of dead and weakened trees these impacts are expected to continue and now accelerate.



**Prior to the fire, tree uprooted adjacent to trail tread creating impact to the trail tread. Firewood cutters cut the tree on the trail and dragged portions of the tree across the trail.**



**Tree uprooted adjacent to trail tread creating impact to the trail tread (left on photo). Firewood cutters cut the tree on the trail and dragged portions of the tree across the trail (foreground of photograph).**



**Overview of burned area along the main road, 8/16/2015.**



**Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) and Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail tread.**

## **Purpose and Need for Action**

The proposed salvage will occur on an 80 acre parcel of BLM lands in the Lolo Creek drainage to remove hazard trees along a well traveled public road between Weippe and Kamiah (Lolo Road), protect the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and recover the remaining value of the timber.

The proposed action, as described below, was developed to conform with decisions from the December 2009 Cottonwood Approved RMP. Specifically, the proposal is allowed for in the RMP under:

### **Cultural Resources**

**Goal CR-1**—Preserve and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses.

**Objective CR-1.2**—Identify cultural properties requiring physical or administrative protection measures to protect site integrity and implement necessary measures.

**Action CR-1.2.3**—Implement site protection measures to protect at-risk sites.

**Action CR-1.2.4**—Identify opportunities for cultural heritage education to emphasize important cultural resource values and to assist in protecting sites or areas.

**Goal CR-2**—Reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resources uses, by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106.

**Objective CR-2.1**—Determine potential effects from proposed land use authorizations.

**Action CR-2.1.1**—Identify and evaluate sites and/or traditional cultural properties to determine potential effects.

### **National Historic Trails**

**Goal NT-1**—Manage National Trails to protect the values for which they were designated.

**Objective NT-1.1**—Protect and enhance National Trail values based on trail characteristics.

**Action NT-1.1.1**—Develop appropriate measures to protect National Trail (19.93 miles) resources on a case-by-case basis.

**Action NT-1.1.2**—Inventory and record sections of the Lewis and Clark and the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trails (19.93 miles).

**Action NT-1.1.3**—Develop information and interpretive materials for public distribution.

## **Forest Products**

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

**Objective FP-1.2**—Maintain a forest management program that complements resource objectives for other programs.

**Action FP-1.2.1**—Develop silvicultural treatments that support Desired Future Conditions (DFC) in DFC blocks.

**Objective FP-1.3**—Prioritize vegetation treatment projects that will maximize 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 wildfire, expedite salvage to capture economic return.

## **Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Research Natural Areas**

**Goal AR-1**—Maintain or enhance relevant resource values of more than local importance, or protect life and promote safety where natural hazards exist.

**Objective AR-1.8**—Protect and conserve scenic values, cultural resources, ecological resources and special status fish, wildlife and plants through the designation of Upper Lolo Creek as an ACEC (1,625 acres).

**Action AR-1.8.3**—Protect and enhance segments of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Cooperate with partners in the management of these trails.

**Action AR-1.8.4**—Timber harvest activities on slopes over 35 percent will utilize yarding methods (such as aerial or high lead systems) that minimize ground disturbance.

**Action AR-1.8.5**—Roads not needed for long-term management will be decommissioned.

**Action AR-1.8.8**—DFC for forest vegetation is identified in Appendix C of the 2009 Cottonwood RMP.

The *need for action* is to:

- Respond to high mortality to trees adjacent to the Lolo road to enhance safety and decrease road maintenance.
- Promote early seral species within the project area (plant conifer seedlings).
- Respond to a high severity wildfire that killed trees immediately adjacent to the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. These trees often are uprooted during wind events and in many cases these trees have permanently altered the trail tread as they upheave. Furthermore, these trees are commonly harvested as fuelwood, either before or after falling to the ground, and damage has been noted in the area from the dragging of these trees across the trail to get them nearer to a road.

The *purpose* of the project is to:

- Reduce risk to human life associated with fire damaged trees.
- Provide forest products to help meet local and national demands, provide an economic return to the taxpayer and assist in the creation and/or perpetuation of jobs in the local economy.
- Expedite reforestation of the project area.
- Protect the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail by removing trees immediately adjacent to the trail that pose a threat to the continued existence of the trail tread, generally due to root throw or fuelwood cutters disturbing trail tread, in coordination between BLM Cottonwood forestry and cultural programs.

## **Preliminary Issues**

Preliminary issues to be addressed in the NEPA document and assist in guiding alternative development, issue analysis and development of design features of the proposed action include the following:

- Cultural Resources: Proposed activities may have potential impacts to the sections of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail or other potential sites within the project boundary.

Fish and Aquatic Habitats: Proposed activities may have potential impacts to fisheries and aquatic habitat in Lolo Creek as a result of timber harvest and temporary road construction. Lolo Creek provides habitat for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed fish and BLM designated sensitive fish species

- Wildlife and Habitats: Proposed activities may have potential impacts to wildlife species and wildlife habitats. The project area provides habitat for BLM designated sensitive species.
- Transportation: Proposed activities include temporary road construction to access harvest areas. Access to complete management activities requires a transportation network. Designing a transportation system that balances implementing the project cost effectively versus the environmental impacts is an important project consideration.
- Soils: Proposed activities may decrease long-term soil productivity and directly affect other physical properties of this landscape including watershed condition. Slope failure can occur in response to management activities, particularly from roads. Management actions may result in accelerated erosion, particularly in areas that have burned with high erosion hazards.
- Economics: The cost of implementing the project and the rapid decrease in product value compared to the economic benefits is a concern. Although the proposed action would reduce impacts to the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail segments within the project area, the project may be perceived as economically inefficient from an accounting standpoint.

## **Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to harvest dead and dying trees resulting from the fire on 49.6 acres of BLM managed lands (see attached maps). Protection of the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail is an important aspect of the

proposal. No tree, under any circumstance, would be drug across the trail nor would any equipment be allowed to cross the portions of the trail still in existence. No skyline corridors would be permitted to cross the trail. The objective is to have trees directionally fell away from the trail, if a tree is felled across the trail only the portions of the tree that are not on the tread can be skidded away from the trail. There will be no landings on or close enough to the trail to adversely impact it.

Harvest operations would require approximately 0.4 miles of temporary road to be constructed and then decommissioned following harvest. Approximately 815 feet of temporary road would cross Idaho Department of Lands property to access the southern portions of Unit 5 and Unit 1. Unit 7 can be accessed from an existing IDL road. Of the 49.6 acres of harvest, it would include 17.2 acres of ground based harvest on units with average slopes less than 35 percent and 32.4 acres of cable harvest on steeper units (greater than 35 percent). Table 1 summarizes the various harvest methods by unit number. The proposed harvest would take place in the fall of 2016.

**Table 1.** Lolo 80 Salvage Harvest Units, Harvest Methods and Acres

<b>Harvest Unit</b>	<b>Harvest Method</b>	<b>Acres</b>
1	Cable	8.5
2	Tractor	10.7
3	Tractor	6.5
4	Cable	9.5
5high	Cable	4.7
5low	Cable	1.8
6	Cable	6.1
7	Cable	1.8

The section of the Lolo Creek Road that crosses BLM is not adequate for a loaded, conventional stinger-steer log truck to maneuver. The switch backs radii are narrow and too steep to allow a standard load of logs (33-40 foot) to be removed. We do not anticipate enough realignment of the switch backs to allow for conventional haul, especially where the Nez Perce (Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail intersects the road in Unit 5high. Enough realignment may occur to allow short log loads on a log truck or the use of a

forwarder may be utilized on the road surface to remove the logs to potential landings in Unit 3 and in Unit 1. To avoid impacting the Trails in the switch back in Unit 5, forwarding could occur in both a North and South direction on the road, thus impeding traffic. It is expected that the road will need to be closed to public travel during harvest operations, approximately the fall of 2016.

Salvage of timber will not remove all of the dead or dying trees in the project area. Harvest is excluded from riparian conservation areas (RCAs) with widths adhering to the Cottonwood Field Office 2009 RMP. Only dead or dying trees will be harvested; however, incidental green trees may be removed in landing locations and during reconditioning of roads to facilitate safe haul. Residual snags and down coarse woody debris will be left on site adhering to the RMP requirements for Potential Vegetation Group 6 (Cool Moist Grand Fir). An even distribution of snags across every acre is not expected. Snags may be left as individuals scattered throughout a unit or as patches of varying size. Table 2 references the minimum snags per acre by diameter group that would be left, and within the project area this number would be exceeded.

**Table 2.** Lolo 80 Salvage Snag Retention

<b>Diameter Group</b>	<b>Snags per Acre</b>
10-20"	1.8-5.5
>20"	.2-3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.0-9.0</b>
<b>Min. Height</b>	30 feet

Reforestation would be planned for the spring of 2017 for the entire harvested area. Silvicultural prescriptions based on habitat type would be prepared and will detail the reforestation objectives as well as planting densities and species mix.

Slash would be treated following harvest by mechanical piling at the landings, then burning of the piles.

**Alternatives Development**

Alternatives to the proposed action as identified by the Cottonwood BLM ID team include a No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative would not allow for any timber harvest. Natural succession would continue to take place in the stand and the dead timber would continue to deteriorate potentially damaging the trail and creating hazards. No new temporary road construction would occur.

Additional alternatives that meet the purpose and need for action may be added as necessary as a result of internal and public scoping.

### **Public Input Needed**

Comments are specifically requested on the proposed action, preliminary issues, and alternatives. Comments made on this proposal would be most helpful if they are received by **June 15, 2016** and are directly relevant to the proposal and project area. The BLM will not reject public feedback outside established public involvement timeframes; however, these comments may be considered secondary to comments received in a timely manner and may only be assessed to determine if they identify concerns that would substantially alter the assumptions, proposal, design, or analysis presented in the EA. Email comments to [blm\\_id\\_lolo80salvage@blm.gov](mailto:blm_id_lolo80salvage@blm.gov) or submit them via postal mail to the address in the letterhead. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

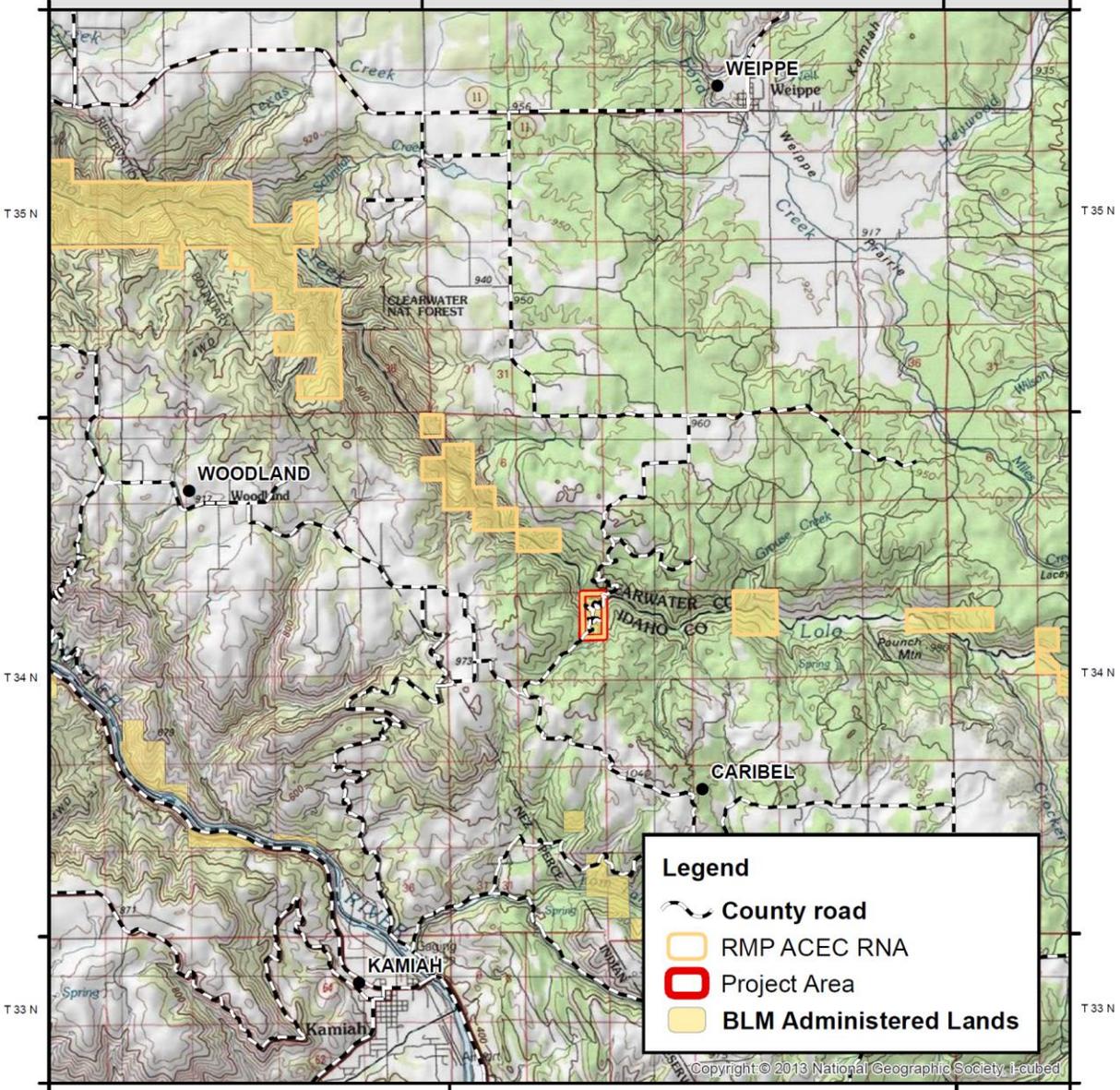
For additional information please contact Zack Stewart, Forester (208) 962-3594.

### **Attachments**

- 1) Vicinity Map
- 2) Proposed Action Scoping Map
- 3) Burn Severity Map

# Lolo 80 Salvage

## Vicinity Map



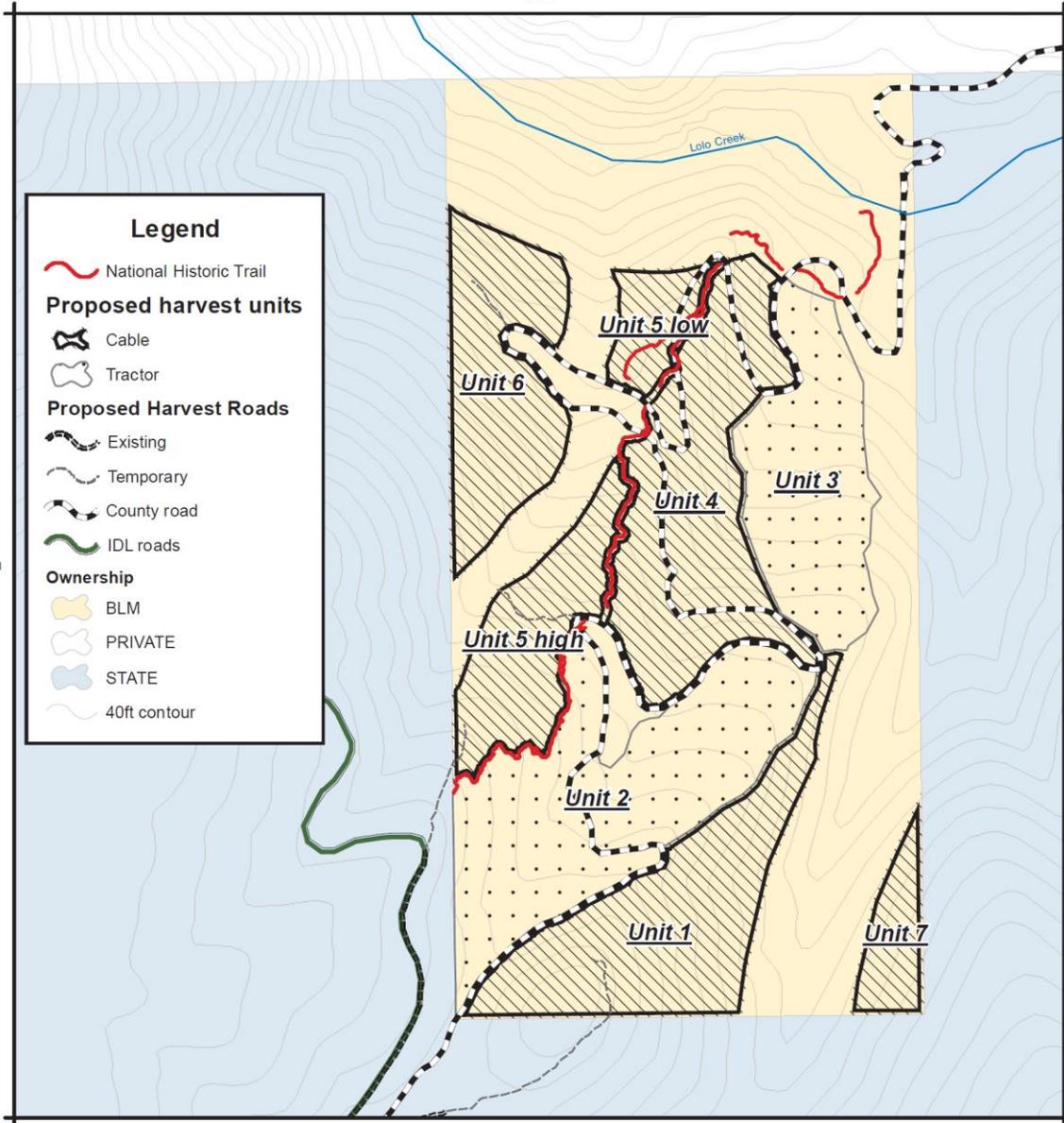
The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

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Map Created: 5/10/2016



# Lolo 80 Salvage Units Proposed Action Scoping 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.

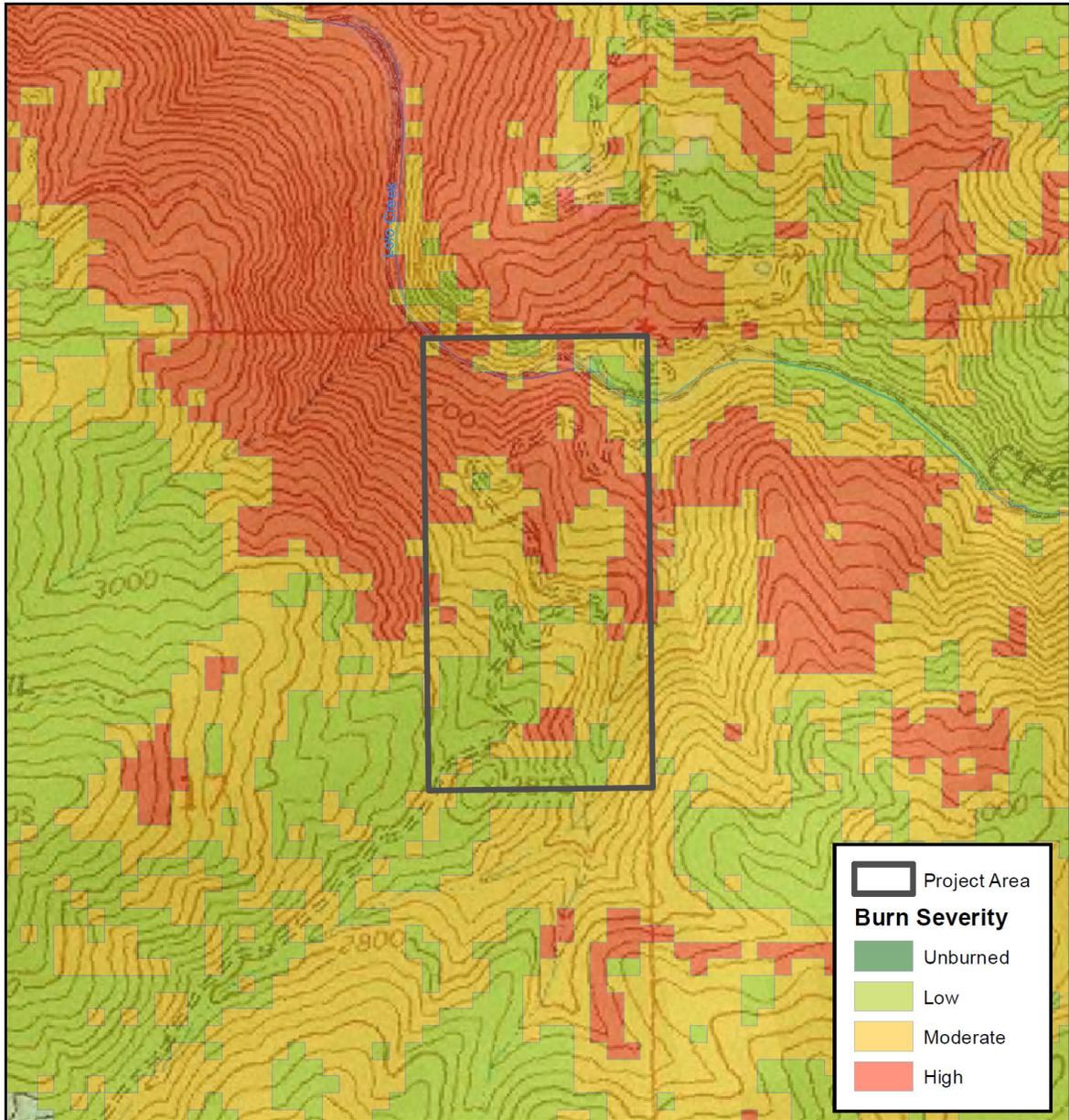
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Map Created: 5/18/2016

# Lolo 80 - Burn Severity

## Cottonwood Field Office - Idaho BLM



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0 0.1 0.2 0.3 Miles

Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N



Map Created: 5/11/2016

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