United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Cherry Run Project

Draft Decision Notice
Finding of No Significant Impact

Bradford Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest, Warren County, Pennsylvania

Warrants: James Godfrey, Robert Falconer, Samuel Williamson, Timothy Barns, 2445, 2453, 2752, 2877, 2960; Lots: 358, 359, 366, 367, 369, 370, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, and 440, Sheffield Township, Warren County, Pennsylvania.

August 2019

Responsible Official:

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Reasons for the Decision

This Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact documents the Forest Service decision and rationale for authorizing the Proposed Action (Alternative 1) on National Forest System (NFS) lands for the Cherry Run Project. It implements management actions for vegetation, streams, transportation, wildlife habitat and nonnative invasive plants within the 7,578 acre project area, located near Henrys Mills, Pennsylvania. The project area consists of 5,714 acres of NFS lands and 1,864 acres of privately owned land (Map 1)[1]. Work will take place over a 20-year period. The draft decision is provided on the attached maps, 2 through 5.

The Forest Service completed the Cherry Run Project environmental assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Decision Notice incorporates by reference the Cherry Run EA, available at web link: https://www.fs.usda.gov/nfs/11558/www/nepa/111004_FSPLT3_4655018.pdf

The project implements the Allegheny National Forest (ANF) Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Record of Decision (ROD) (USDA FS 2007a), and the ANF Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) (USDA FS 2007b). The proposed actions are designed to move the area towards the desired condition as outlined in the Forest Plan.

Forest Plan management areas (MAs) occur on NFS lands within the project area: MA 2.2 (3,190 acres) and MA 3.0 (2,524 acres). Desired conditions for MA 2.2 are for older, late structural forests that link relatively large areas of older forests (core areas) across the landscape (Forest Plan, pages 109 to 112). The desired conditions for MA 3.0 is for even-aged management that provides a mixed forest of predominantly shade intolerant and mid-tolerant hardwood stands of various ages and associated understories, and habitat for a diversity of plant and animal species (Forest Plan, pages 113 to 116).

Purpose and Need

Details of the project purpose and need are provided on pages 1 to 5 in the Cherry Run EA. The following statements summarize the project's purpose and need, linking these statement to the Forest Plan.

- Provide a diversity of vegetation patterns across the landscape that represents well distributed habitats, a range of forest age classes and vegetative stages, a variety of healthy functioning vegetation layers, moderate to well-stocked forest cover, and the variety of vegetation species or forest types necessary to achieve multiple resource objectives and sustain ecosystem health (Forest Plan, page 14);
- Continue to implement and monitor a range of silvicultural and reforestation practices in order to be responsive to emerging issues and regenerate stands to a diversity of tree seedlings of good quality, form and health (Forest Plan, page 14); and,
- Ensure that a healthy, diverse, resilient, and well stocked forest is provided in light of several concurrent forest health threats (Forest Plan, pages 14, 15, and 21).
- Address nonnative invasive plants (Forest Plan, page 13).
- Enhance wildlife habitat on 1,200 to 1,600 acres each year to provide desired cover and forage conditions (Forest Plan, page 20).
- Restore and enhance stream processes and aquatic habitat diversity for brook trout and other headwater stream fishes (Forest Plan, pages 14, 20, 22, 46, and 80).

[1] No actions are proposed on private lands.

- Provide a safe, efficient and economical transportation system that is responsive to public and administrative needs, while having minimal adverse effects on the natural forest ecosystem (Forest Plan, page 16).

Draft Decision

I am the responsible Forest Service Official for this draft decision to authorize the Proposed Action (Alternative 1). I have considered the analysis of issues and alternatives contained in the EA for this project, ANF Forest Plan and FEIS for lands administered by the ANF, and applicable laws.

This draft decision is applicable to the purpose and need statements for the Cherry Run project provided above and in detail on pages 1 to 5 of the Cherry Run EA. After reviewing the analysis, supporting documents and public comments, I approve implementation of the proposed action (Alternative 1) described in the EA on pages 5 to 9 and the attached maps 2-4.

My decision and findings are based on the Cherry Run Project EA, including Appendix A – Forest Plan standards and guidelines applicable to the project, other resource analyses prepared to support the EA (project record), and the Forest Plan documents. The Forest Plan, Appendix A provides the rationale for choice of vegetation management practices. My decision approves the following actions:

Silvicultural Treatments on 1,160 acres (Map 2). Descriptions of silvicultural treatments are provided in the Forest Plan, pages 64 to 69 and A-18 to A-26. Appendix A of this decision includes a stand specific description of proposed treatments.

Table 1. Cherry Run silvicultural treatments by management area (MA) (Map 2).

MA	Treatment	Acres
2.2	Accelerate mature forest conditions.	38.6
	Group selection to restore understory mature forest conditions.	241.6
	Shelterwood/final harvest.	0.1
	Two-aged harvest.	90.1
3.0	Group selection to restore understory mature forest conditions.	0.0
	Shelterwood/final harvest.	546.0
	Site preparation/final harvest.	225.9
	Two-aged harvest.	17.8

Reforestation treatments for all vegetation proposals, but implemented on a site specific basis (Map 2). Reforestation treatments are described in the Forest Plan, pages 70 to 72 and A-30 to A-36. Acres proposed for reforestation are at the maximum and would likely be less based on the need during implementation.

Table 2. Reforestation actions and acres proposed within the Cherry Run Project area.

Treatment	Acres
Site Preparation, herbicide, weed and release, fence, and plant[2]	1121.4
Fertilizer	149

Regenerating declining or poorly stocked stands to vigorous well-stocked stands using a variety of timber harvest and reforestation treatments would help to sustain ecosystem resilience and biodiversity in the project area, in the long term. In some areas, regeneration harvests combined with past and other previously approved regeneration harvests would create temporary openings that would exceed 40 acres

[2] Manual cutting of interfering vegetation

in size (Table 3). Early-aged stands are considered temporary openings until dominant and co-dominant trees have reached a height of 15 feet (Forest Plan, p. 68). Forest Plan standards and guidelines would be followed for temporary openings created by the application of even-aged silviculture (USDA-FS 2007, p.68). For example, regeneration proposed in MA 2.2 are proposed for a two-aged or uneven- aged treatments to achieve MA desired conditions.

Table 3. Proposed temporary openings (blocks) that would exceed 40 acres by management area (MA).

Block[3]	MA	Compartment and Stands	Acres[4]
1	2.2 and 3.0	308001 (MR)[5], 308002, 308004, 308005, 308016, 308018, 308031, 308032, 309003, 309005, 309006, 309008, 309009, 309010, 309011, 309014, 309015, 309017 (MR), 309022, 309024, 309039, 309041, 309044, 310002, 310005, 310008 (MR), 310010 (MR), 310011,310012, 310014(MR), 310015, 310020, 310021, 310022, 310029, 310042	696
2	3.0	309029 (MR), 309037, 309034, 310031, 310025, 310028, 310034	165
3	3.0	303007 (MR), 303027, 303028(MR), 303029	121
4	3.0	304002 (MR), 304003, 304005 (MR), 304008, 304035 (MR)	78

Nonnative invasive plant treatments on 700 acres.

Table 4. Nonnative invasive plants treatments for the Cherry Run project area (Map 2).

Treatment	Acres[6]
Combinations of manual treatments (pulling, digging, or hand-roughing), mechanical treatments (brush-cutting, mowing, or removal by motorized equipment), and herbicide treatments (glyphosate, sulfometuron methyl, or both), as needed.	700

Wildlife habitat improvement activities on 71 acres.

Table 5. Wildlife habitat improvements.

Treatment	Compartment/Stand	Acres
In existing openings, mow strips, plant shrubs, fruit trees, and conifer groups, add fences, replace damaged fences, and prune fruit trees.	302/5, 7; 309/45; 310/37; and 304/46.	29
Within proposed silvicultural treatment stands; under plant 10% of stands with shrubs (serviceberry, elderberry) and groups of white pine within fenced stands.	302/37; 303/13, 21, 29, 36; 304/26, 29, 34; 308/16, 31, 39; and 310/21, 25	42

[3] Blocks are identified as groups of stands that combined would exceed 40 acres.
[4] The blocks identified above represent the maximum size of the opening if all activities were to be implemented at once. The project will not be implemented in this fashion. Opening sizes would be reduced by: applying mitigation measures that break up contiguous openings such as stream buffers, other resource buffers, reserve areas, reserve trees, and limits on basal area reduction; staggering implementation over the course of several years such as harvesting a portion of one block, and then harvesting the remainder after the first portion harvested regenerates; and/or, other actions to reduce opening size due to operability or other resource concerns.
[5] MR refers to Martin Run FEIS (USDA FS 2005) stands aged 20 years or less or approved to be implemented.
[6] Additional infestations and species from the ANF Invasive Plant Species of Concern list will be treated if found within the project area, and consistent with applicable Forest Plan direction.

Water Resources and Fishery Habitat improvements on 25.7 stream miles.

Stream restoration
185 trees per mile would be felled into streams and onto floodplains to improve floodplain connectivity, ground water infiltration, discharge rates, and low flow rates (Table 6, Map 3). Trees felled within the riparian areas would occur where large woody debris is lacking and trees are available to be felled without largely reducing stream shading or bank stability. Trees would be of sufficient size and positioned so they are stable in the stream and floodplain.

Table 6. Stream and fishery habitat proposed treatments.

Treatment	Stream Miles
Level 1: fell trees into the streams and move into place by grip hoist or winch.	25.6
Level 2: uproot trees by grip hoist/other equipment to place in the stream.	0.1

South Branch Tionesta Creek Stream Restoration near FR 446 Bridge
About 284 linear feet (0.1 acre) of South Branch Tionesta Creek streambank would be stabilized by constructing large wood complexes. Currently, the stream is migrating into the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) and erosion is occurring. This section of stream is shallow and has potential for pool development. Access to the proposal site would be from Forest road 148 at the trail parking area. Equipment use in the stream and on the NCNST would be temporary to deliver the rock, logs with rootwads, and logs to the site.

Transportation improvements on 24.1 miles of road, 4 culverts and 1 bridge.

Table 7. Transportation proposed actions within the Cherry Run project area.

Road Activity	Miles/no.	Forest Road Number		
New corridor construction	0.4 mi.	FR 446H		
Add existing non-system corridor to national forest transportation system (reconstruction, construction, and/or realignment)	4.5 mi.	148A, 148B, 148C, 162 Ext., 413BA, 446F, 446G, 446H, 446JA		
High quality road surfacing - within 300' of a stream.	5.2 mi.	103, 148, 148A, 148C, 162, 413, 446-1, 600		
Maintenance on haul roads	14 mi.	Various Forest Roads		
Existing ≥100 acre watershed culverts/stream crossings - The following forest roads include ≥100 acre drainage areas and aquatic organism passages (AOP). Existing undersized culverts in good condition unless noted.	4 culverts and 1 bridge	**Road Number**	**Stream Name Crossing**	**Road Milepost**
		FR 148	SB Tionesta Creek (Bridge)	0.171
			Rock Run	1.888
		FR 162	West Fork Run (Due for replacement - AOP	0.617
		FR 413	Unnamed Tributary to Tionesta Creek	0.039
		FR 446-1	Cherry Run (Due for replacement - AOP	0.013

Roadside hazard tree salvage/sanitation treatments on 22 miles of road.
This hazard tree proposal involves the felling and potential harvesting of merchantable trees that pose a road hazard (diseased, dead, dying, or excessively leaning trees) (Table 8). Equipment will remain on improved road surfaces. Hazard trees not accessible from roads will be cut and left on the site. The hazard tree treatment meets the purpose and need for the project under providing a safe, transportation system

Table 8. Proposed roadside hazard tree salvage/sanitation.

Treatment	Miles/acres	Location
Salvage/sanitation/safety action for hazard trees within 100 feet on either side of the edge of the road.	22 miles/ 532 acres	Various forest roads

Site-specific mitigations for the project are included in the EA on p. 10. During the 30-day comment period, comments were received on the adequacy of the proposed no harvest buffers along the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST). Based on these comments and coordination with the ANF Chapter – North Country Trail Association, the buffers for two stands (#30914 and #30915) have been increased to 150 feet. This change is based on the prescription proposed for the stand, the topography of the area and the location of the trail within the timber unit.

Decision Rationale

My decision will authorize the proposed action (Alternative 1) and allow implementation within the Cherry Run project decision area in a manner consistent with the approved authorized action. The decision will be implemented over a twenty year period. Given the scope and timeframe of implementing the project, and when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (Environmental Consequences, EA, pages 12 to 45), the project will not have significant impacts or significant cumulative impacts on the environment. The overall effects of implementing the proposed action (Alternative 1) are anticipated to improve forest health and promote sustainability within the project area.
In making this decision, I considered the following factors:

- Is the project consistent with strategies described in the Forest Plan which are relevant and specific to the affected resources and resource concerns?
- Is the project consistent with the rationale for choice of vegetation management practices (described in terms of appropriateness and optimality in the Forest Plan; Appendix A)?
- Does the project incorporate all relevant design criteria, consistent with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and can be implemented with limited adverse impacts and would not impair the overall long- term productivity of NFS lands?
- Does the project meet the purpose and need of the project?
- Has the project been developed through public involvement and coordination with our publics, partners, adjacent landowners, and other agencies?
- Is the project consistent with other Federal policy?
- Is the project typical of other multiple use management projects on the Bradford Ranger District based on the size of the project area, size of individual treatment areas, scope of activities, duration of implementation, and prescribed methods?

Conclusions and recommendations in the ANF Monitoring Report for fiscal years (FY) 2008 to 2013 (USDA-Forest Service 2014) further support the purpose and need and proposed action for the project. As of the end of the FY 2013 ANF Forest Plan monitoring effort, early structural forest habitat has declined from approximately 8% of the forested landscape to 3.4% since the start the Forest Plan implementation

(Page 68). The desired condition of early structural habitat created by timber harvest or natural disturbance is 10% to 12% of the forested landscape (Forest Plan Errata).

Even-aged and uneven aged regeneration harvests have been lower than Forest Plan objectives. Landscape-level desired vegetative structural stages and age classes would not be sustained at levels sufficient to meet desired Forest Plan conditions (Forest Plan, page 121).

In addition, invasive insects and disease continue to be the most significant threats to the health of forests on the ANF. The ANF FY 2008 – FY 2013 Monitoring and Evaluation Report recommends to enhance the diversity of forest vegetation in terms of composition and structure in order to improve the resiliency of the forest and reduce the level of impact from insects and diseases (USDA FS 2014, page 185). The Cherry Run project area is experiencing an outbreak of diseases and nonnative insects, including black cherry decline, beech bark disease, and emerald ash borer infestation. Future tree impacts are anticipated with the onset of the hemlock wooly adelgid and spotted lanternfly. In the Cherry Run project area, there is a decline in overstory tree stocking levels. Natural tree regeneration will be affected by insect and disease threats, and combined with deer population impacts without action. To promote healthy stands that are more resilient to insects and diseases, stands will be regenerated before further stocking levels decline and while tree seed crops are still available.

Considering all of these factors, I am confident that the proposed action (Alternative 1) is well-grounded in the Forest Plan as a guiding document, current and consistent with recommendations from the FY2008-FY2013 Monitoring Report, and all of the elements of the proposed action are responsive to the purpose and need for action.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed action, Alternative 1, I considered one other alternative (no action, Alternative 2). A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on pages 9 and 10. Under the no action alternative, current management plans continue to guide management of the project area with none of the proposed actions approved. Alternative 2 does not meet the purpose and need for action, nor is it consistent with the ANF Forest Plan.

Three alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis because they did not meet the purpose and need for the proposals (Cherry Run EA, page 11). These included:

- Alternative that restricts temporary opening size to 40-acres or less;
- Alternative that eliminates new road construction; and,
- Alternative of salvaging dead and dying trees in these stands without any reforestation activities.

Public Involvement

Public Scoping Period

On March 19, 2019, the Forest Service initiated a public scoping period for the actions proposed and mailed the proposal to ANF stakeholders. Also, on March 20th, a news release (FY191917), was provided to media outlets and posted on the ANF website at the Forest Service web link: https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=55612. A news article of the project was published in *The Times Observer* (Warren, Pennsylvania).

Scoping Comments and Forest Service (FS) Response Summary

Scoping comments were received from four respondents and were reviewed by myself and the Interdisciplinary Team. All comments received responses in the project record.

Opportunity to Comment on EA

The Forest Service published a legal notice in *The Bradford Era* (Bradford, Pennsylvania) on Monday, June 10, 2019, page B7 for the release of the Cherry Run EA and the opportunity to comment. The EA was posted under the "Analysis" tab at the Forest Service web link provided under the public scoping period heading.

EA Comments and Response Summary

Comments[7] on the Cherry Run EA were received from one individual, two government agencies (Warren County School Board and the National Park Service[8]), and one group (ANF Chapter – North Country Trail Association). Forest Service responses to the comments are below:

Commenter 1 voiced approval of the large-scale, vegetative management proposed for the Cherry Run Project: "We believe that very aggressive management is required. We concur with the several purposes outlined in the proposal including a range of forest age classes and vegetative states, the implementation of good silvicultural and reforestation practices, and the addressing of non-native invasive species. We inquire whether the proposal does all that it should to meet the serious needs; for example, we suggest the treatment of more acres and to expand the regeneration treatments to more aggressively pursue the cultivation of early structural stage vegetation."

Commenter 1 also stated that "While we support the stated purposes of the project, we would also ask you to expand the purposes as follows: first it would be beneficial to reference the benefits cited in the 2007 Forest Plan, namely how this project will help generate sustaining local jobs and provide support to local schools. Second, we ask that the documents do a better job of stating the role of the project in the larger role of remediating the serious age class imbalance. There are at least two elements of the 2007 Forest Plan which should constitute this greater context, namely the recommended age classes and the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ). It has been acknowledged many times that achieving the ASQ contained in the 2007 Forest Plan would be a key factor in remediating the age class imbalance. It would be beneficial to see how each project factors into the larger problem of age class imbalance to help ANF stakeholders understand a) when the slide into worsening imbalance will halt; and b) (if the slide reverses) how fast strides are being made to return to the desired age class balance."

FS response: The purpose and need statement included structural age class diversity on pages 2-3 of the EA. While it did not specifically address how the project will factor into the larger problem of age class imbalance forestwide, Table 17 on page 22 of the EA displays that implementation of this project will result in 1,264 acres or 17% of the project area being in the 0-20 age class in the year 2039.
During the development of the purpose and need statement for the Cherry Run Project, the interdisciplinary team recognized that while this project benefits the local economy and schools as well as contributes to the 2007 Forest Plan goal of 10-12% in the early structural class, the primary purpose of this particular project is to address the serious forest health concerns in the Cherry Run project area. Inclusion of these additional rationale will be considered in future projects, specifically ones that propose the regeneration of healthy timber stands.

Commenter 2 stated that "I was surprised when I read in both the scoping document and the environmental assessment water quality and fishery habitat "improvement" actions of felling 185 trees per mile into these protected stream beds was being proposed.. It was jaw dropping to read that "restoration work" was being proposed on 300 feet of South Branch Tionesta Creek that would involve the placement of trees AND their rootwads into the stream bed using excavators! The disturbance to the soil, the introduction of sediment into the stream, change in flow velocity and direction were acknowledged but minimized as next to trivial in service to the larger goal of channel habitat diversity.

[7] The public comments are filed in the project record and available upon request.
[8] The North Country National Scenic Trail is administered by the National Park Service.

These proposed actions do not appear to have considered the need to comply with PA Code Title 25 Chapter 93 Water Quality Standards Sec. 4: Antidegradation Requirements; Sec.4 (c) Protection of High Quality and Exceptional Value Waters subsections (1) Point source discharge and B (ii) Public Hearing Requirement ; Sec. 6: Water Quality Criteria; Sec. 7: Specific Water Criteria, and Sec. 9: Designated Water Uses and Water Quality Criteria subsection q: Drainage List Q. Also applicable is USEPA document, Withdrawal of Federal Antidegradation Policy for Pennsylvania (2010). These actions need further thought and consultation with the appropriate agencies."

FS response: It is important to note that while some people may find the presence of large woody debris in streambeds aesthetically unpleasing, it provides crucial habitat for a variety of aquatic wildlife that has been lacking since the Allegheny was extensively logged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The presence of such debris in waterways is characteristic of late-successional old-growth forests and healthy aquatic habitat.
All activities, including the large wood projects, in the Cherry Run project would be required to maintain or improve the water quality standards of the streams in the project area through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's anti-degradation requirement (PADEP 2016). The Forest Service will apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to acquire the appropriate permit for these projects. We have followed this process and implemented a similar project on East Branch of Spring Creek in 2016. The permitting process will begin after the Cherry Run project decision has been signed. The permit will incorporate project design features, Forest Plan standards and guidelines, and Pennsylvania best management practices to ensure that effects from the project would have no adverse effects to water resources.
The following are some examples of practices used to reduce short-term and long-term sedimentation effects from the installation of root wads and logs using excavators: using designated stream crossing areas for equipment, working in low flow conditions, minimizing the time in the channel, and stabilizing and seeding soils. In addition, as much soils as possible would be removed from the root wads with the excavator before they are placed in the stream. This action mimics the natural occurrence of trees uprooting into streams as the stream migrates. Root wads are very stable in streams because they act as anchors and dig into the channel. The effects of embedding the logs and root wads into the channel would be short-term and turbidity is expected to return to normal very soon after equipment operation ends. Vegetation would become established on disturbed areas and lessen sedimentation and erosion. Final stability will take up to two months to within one year. Over the long term, the large wood structures are expected to trap a larger volume of sediment than this project would produce. In addition, the structures are expected to be beneficial to fish and other aquatic animals through the creation of diverse habitats, retaining organic matter, reducing flow velocities, and increasing flood water retention.

Commenter 2 also states "In addition to South Branch Tionesta, Cherry Run and Martin Run, the streams Mead Run, Rock Run and UNT-Tionesta Creek are cold water fish streams and are covered under PA Code 25 Chapter 93 sec.7: Specific Water Quality Criteria which includes water temperature as well as pollution restrictions. The magnitude of basal reduction resulting from shelterwood treatments as shown in Table 19: Project area small watersheds with shelterwood treatments that would result in basal area reductions needs further thought."

FS response: In response to the concern Regarding Water Quality and Water Quantity: Basal Area Reduction, please understand that the Forest Hydrologist thoroughly analyzed the potential effects and added mitigation measures to the project that specifically address this concern. As stated on page 10 of the Cherry Run EA, basal area reduction in small watersheds will be limited to 25% until adjacent areas reach a minimum age of six years. Moreover, all other water protection standards and guidelines of the forest plan will be followed during implementation. This includes the retention of forested buffers adjacent to all water features as seen in Tables 9 and 10, as well as the retention of a minimum of a quarter acre of existing structure per five acres of timber harvest in timber stands devoid of any existing water features. In addition, water quality monitoring and brook trout monitoring would occur on a subset

of these watersheds to determine any impacts or response. All combined, these protective measures reduce the impacts to the forest's water resources to a negligible level.

Table 9. Fixed-width Distances for the Identification of the Riparian Corridor

Water Features	Distance from each bank or ordinary high water mark, measured as slope distance
Allegheny River	Minimum of 300 feet
Wilderness Trout Streams, Remote Trout Streams, or Class A Trout Streams[1]	Minimum of 200 feet or 50 feet plus 4 feet for every 1 percent of slope, whichever is greater.
Perennial streams and other perennial water bodies	Minimum of 100 feet or 50 feet plus 4 feet for every 1 percent of slope, whichever is greater.
Intermittent streams and mapped wetlands – water does not need to be present on the surface at the time of inventory	Minimum of 50 feet plus 2 feet for every 1 percent of slope.

Table 10. Overview of Guidelines for the Wetland Management Zones

Water Features	Wetlands, Including Springs and Seeps	Vernal Pools
	Distance is measured from the wetland perimeter or high water mark.	
Wetland Management Zone No new construction. Travel and maintenance permitted on existing roads and trails.	0 to 100 feet	0 to 200 feet
Excluded Activities No heavy equipment use or removal of vegetation except for maintenance or wetland restoration.	0 to 25 feet	0 to 100 feet
Limited Management Retain at least an average of 50 percent canopy cover.	25 to 100 feet	100 to 200 feet
Heavy Equipment Limitations Utilize low ground pressure or occur during proper site conditions to avoid rutting.	25 to 100 feet	100 to 200 feet

Commenter 2 also states "To me, of particular concern is the still unaddressed issue of what is going to replace the carbon sequestering and oxygen emitting function of the trees and understory plants proposed for removal after the harvest (1st and 2nd) have been implemented and before the anticipated seedlings reach the comparable pre-harvest carbon sequestering capacity. In other words--- the time between--- when there is an increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere because the trees storing and sequestering carbon are no longer there and a decrease in available oxygen in the atmosphere because those same trees are no longer there participating in the carbon cycle." "You also "mentioned" soil disturbing activities followed by a breezy ---"it will be temporary" --- okay, but it counts, particularly since you are already proposing removing the carbon capturing tree function; now you are also releasing/disturbing the carbon storage of the soil, but nary a word is mentioned regarding thought about this activity or how concretely it will be as little as possible."

FS response: The question of carbon sequestration is thoroughly addressed in the document "Project scale Carbon Effects – Cherry Run Project, Allegheny National Forest, Eastern Region" (available in the project record). In essence, this report reveals that much of the carbon in mature live trees that are harvested is retained in a "sink" as building products in permanent structures. Moreover, the temporary reduction in carbon uptake following timber harvest is rapidly replaced and surpassed by the vigorous growth of a new, young forest, which will continue to sequester carbon at a much more accelerated rate than the previous forest for decades to come. Likewise, the young, growing forest will emit proportional quantities of oxygen. The net amount of oxygen produced by a tree during a year is directly related to the amount of carbon sequestered by the tree, which is tied to the accumulation of tree biomass. (Nowak et al., 2007).

Forested area on the Allegheny National Forest will be maintained as forest in the foreseeable future, which will allow for a continuation of carbon uptake and storage over the long term. The Allegheny National Forest will continue to have an important role in maintaining the carbon sink, regionally and nationally, for decades to come.

The project level carbon assessment shows that the proposed project affects a relatively small amount (less than 1 percent) of forest land and carbon on the Allegheny National Forest and might temporarily contribute an extremely small quantity of greenhouse gas emissions relative to national and global emissions. This proposed action will not convert forest land to other non-forest uses, thus allowing any carbon initially emitted from the proposed action to have a temporary influence on atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, because carbon will be removed from the atmosphere over time as the forest regrows. Furthermore, the proposed project will transfer carbon in the harvested wood to the product sector, where it may be stored for up to several decades and substitute for more emission intensive materials or fuels. This proposed action is consistent with internationally recognized climate change adaptation and mitigation practices.

Timber harvesting generally results in a negligible amount of carbon loss from the mineral soils typically found in the United States, particularly when operations are designed in a way that minimizes soil disturbance (Nave et al., 2010; McKinley et al., 2011). Although timber harvest can also affect the carbon stored in the understory and forest floor organic layer consisting of debris in various stages of decomposition, the carbon loss would be negligible given it is not stable or long-lived and would be replaced within months to a few years.

Commenter 2 also commented regarding the mitigation measures that will be applied to break up contiguous temporary openings exceeding 40 acres such as stream buffers, reserve areas, reserve trees, and limits on basal area reduction; (and) staggering implementation over the course of several years such as harvesting a portion of one block, and then harvesting the remainder after the first portion harvested regenerates; and/or other actions to reduce opening size due to operability or other resource concerns. Referencing Table 5 on page 6 of the environmental assessment, the commenter states "This is not a mitigation plan. This is a broad, abstract construct for 1,060 acres consisting of blocks of actual removal of trees creating openings varying in size from 696 acres to 76 acres. This does not describe for the reader, Forest Service staff or future contractors exactly what actions are to be implemented (if approved) in the greater than 40 acre openings nor does it describe an actual time frame under which the above described "mitigating" activities will occur." Similarly, the commenter continued with the statement that "Reforestation actions and acres proposed within the Cherry Run Project area that there are 1121.4 acres of site preparation, herbicides, weed and release, fence and plant activities. You do not describe where or why. I am assuming at least some of the fencing is to try to minimize deer browsing in open blocks where harvesting has been implemented, but you don't say that. If that is what you are planning to do--- then it is part of a plan that, at this point, is only known by you, because you do not tie together and describe specifically what is being abstractly proposed in the Cherry Run area of Allegheny National Forest."

FS response: To a variable extent, some form of timber harvest is associated with forest regeneration. The silvicultural process of natural tree regeneration in the forest types present in the Cherry Run project can take as long as ten years, and even longer in some cases. While certain treatments can be initiated at specific points in time, the subsequent treatments and ultimate outcomes are largely dictated by natural processes such as seed production, weather, and herbivory. The most prudent course of action is to be flexible and adaptive and work with what nature provides. Therefore, it is difficult if not impossible to provide a specific schedule of implementation. However, a comprehensive table (Appendix A) listing all approved treatments by stand is provided in this decision. As seen on the table, the entire suite of reforestation treatments (Site Preparation, herbicide, weed and release, fence, and plant) is approved for all of the timber stands (1,121 acres). It is not anticipated that every stand will require all treatments, but it is prudent to approve all treatments in the event they are needed. Fertilization is anticipated for only 149 acres based upon forest type.
Due to the existing interfering vegetation, it is predicted that nearly all of the stands will require site preparation and herbicide. However, as previously noted, other unpredictable factors such as seed crops (or the lack thereof), weather impacts, and deer predation will dictate the necessity for the subsequent weed & release, fencing, and planting treatments. Sweet birch (*betula lenta*) is a prolific source of seed that is widely dispersed from nearby stands by wind across the frozen snow crust in late winter and early spring. Its seedlings grow very vigorously and tend to outcompete other desirable species. Therefore, the weed & release treatment is often needed to prevent a monoculture of sweet birch. To a lesser extent, deer browsing pressure will necessitate fence construction, typically on less than 200 acres of a project this size. Again, it is too difficult to predict exactly where the fence will be needed, hence the approval for all 1,121 acres. Planting of desirable tree seedlings such as red oak (*quercus rubra)* and white pine (*pinus strobus*) is included as a last resort in the event of any regeneration failures. The declining health of the existing seed source in this project area makes it wise to include potential planting in all of the stands. Typically, at the very least, sweet birch will seed into degraded stands, however, it is best to have planting as a safety net if needed. Most often, it is used to supplement natural regeneration in patches lacking acceptable species composition. It is usually expected that no more than 100 acres in a project this size will require planting, but it is difficult to predict where it will be needed.

In regards to the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCSCT) passing through proposed vegetation management stands, commenter 3 states “We propose that the 100’ buffer be a minimum buffer, that can be extended to 150’ or 200’ depending on the forest type and topography. For example in places of open, level forest a wider buffer would be more appropriate to maintain the high Scenic Integrity Level (SIL) required by the ANF Forest Plan. The wider buffer would also reduce excessive undergrowth, reduce the disruption of surface water patterns and reduce blowdowns due to the logging. Sections of the Cherry Run Project would benefit from this wider buffer.

FS response: As discussed on page 7 of this decision, no cut buffers along the NCNST were modified based on site-specific conditions.

Commenter 3 also states “Secondly, we strongly urge no blue marking paint to be used in logging stands along the NCNST. We appreciate that the mitigations presented are trying to minimize the use of blue paint, requiring it to be placed on sides of the trees facing away from the NCNST. In practice though, we have seen that this does not always work and paint can be seen from the trail, confusing hikers. This is a safety concern that should be addressed.”

FS response: Whenever possible, blue timber marking paint will not be used in timber stands where the NCNST is present. However, Forest Service Policy requires that timber sale stands directly adjacent to other timber sale stands marked with green and yellow paint must be marked with blue paint. Considering that a 100 - 150' buffer will be implemented along the trail and that paint would be facing away from the trail, the impacts would be minimal in the rare event that blue paint would be required.

Commenter 4 states "Thank you most sincerely for your ongoing communication and coordination with our local partners with the North Country Trail Association in regard to the proposed Cherry Run Project Environmental Assessment… I very much appreciate you making the time to meet with (Commenter 3) recently to conduct field reviews of past timber sales and to gain a shared perspective of what sized buffers would be most appropriate in certain scenarios and situations. Based on the feedback I've received following these visits, it seems there is a general group consensus that 100' buffers, as you initially proposed, do indeed provide effective protection to the trail and view shed in some instances; but in more open, level forest stands, a larger buffer is called for. It would be my request that a dynamic approach to determining trail buffer size be incorporated into the plan's implementation, as opposed to a fixed standard of 100' used in all instance. I believe that this approach best meets our collective interests and needs.
It is my understanding that you and the group have also continued the discussion about our concerns of using blue paint along or near the Trail. While it would be my strong preference that some other color be substituted for blue when marking sales near the Trail, I do feel that the proposed mitigation of minimizing paint markings to the sides of trees not visible by hikers should help."

FS response: Thank you for the comment. The issues raised in this comment have been addressed elsewhere in the responses to comment included in this decision.

I have reviewed comments from public scoping and those received during the 30 day comment period for the EA. Forest Service responses address all comments. I believe that the proposed action (Alternative 1) is consistent with the Forest Plan and balances sustainable resource use and ecological sustainability in a manner intended to satisfy competing public demands.

Tribal Consultation

The ANF consulted with tribal representatives from 14 Tribes during the public scoping period for the Cherry Run Project. Tribal consultation for this project will continue throughout the planning process.

Cultural Resource and Endangered Species Act Consultations

The Forest Service has initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO), in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980 and 1992, and the regulations (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 800) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. All cultural sites will be flagged and avoided during project implementation.

The Forest Service will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (PA Field Office), in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Guidance provided will be implemented.

45 Day Objection Period

This Draft Decision Notice will publish a legal notice in The Bradford Era (Bradford, Pennsylvania) initiating the 45 day objection period as part of the pre-decisional, administrative review process required for EAs. It replaces the Forest Service's appeals process (36 CFR 215), effective March 27, 2013 with an objections process as outlined in 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B (Federal Register, Volume 73, No. 59, pages 18481 to 18504), at the following web link:
http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-06857.pdf

Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined that this decision is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively. Preparation of an EIS pursuant to

Section 102 (2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is not required. This determination is based on the following factors as outlined in 40 CFR 1508.27.

Context

Based on the large size of the ANF, approximately 517,000 acres, and the comparatively small percentage of the area proposed for timber harvesting (approximately 15% of the project area and less than 0.25% of the ANF), stream and aquatic habitat improvements, nonnative invasive plant treatments, and transportation actions in this project, impacts, both in the short and long term, are not significant. The Cherry Run project does not establish precedent for any future projects on the Forest.

The context of this proposal is to implement management actions within the Cherry Run project area. The record indicates that even in a local context, this proposal will not pose significant short- or long-term effects. The ANF Forest Plan standards and guidelines, project design features, including the site specific design criteria in Appendix A of the EA and Pennsylvania best management practices, will minimize and avoid adverse impacts. Future projects will be analyzed in context with the activities as proposed or implemented under cumulative effects analyses (EA, pages 17 to 38).

The size and nature of the Cherry Run Project is typical of other multiple-use management projects on the Bradford Ranger District. This Project does not involve unusual or unique treatments or methods. The effects of the common silvicultural treatments used here have been observed in past actions and are well-documented in monitoring reports and field work.

Intensity

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis of this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits.

My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the following ten factors identified in 40 CFR 1508.27(b).

1) Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.

Both beneficial and adverse effects have been considered in the analysis. Benefits of this project were not used to offset adverse impacts, and adverse impacts of this project are not significant even when separated from benefits. The analyses documented in the Environmental Consequences of the EA (pages 12 to 45) state that some direct and indirect effects are expected in the context of the analysis area. Mitigation measures will be applied to the proposed action to ensure that even direct and indirect effects to these resources will not be significant. None of the direct and indirect effects are expected to result in any significant cumulative effects. Effects of the proposed action (Alternative 1) are addressed for public health or safety, unique characteristics of the geographic area, uncertainty, precedent for future action, resource effects analysis for vegetation (silviculture and invasive plants), hydrology, aquatic habitat, and recreation direct, indirect and cumulative effects, respectively, cultural resources, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, migratory birds and federal, state, or local laws. Specialist reports, and project reference documents support the EA conclusions.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

Implementation of this project will not cause any significant effects to public health and safety (EA, pages 13 to 15).

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources,

park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
No parklands, floodplains, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas will be adversely affected by implementing Alternative 1 (EA, pages 15, 16).

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.
"Controversial" in this context refers to cases where substantial scientific dispute exits as to the size, nature, or effects of a major Federal action on some human environmental factor, rather than to public opposition of a proposed action or alternative. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Controversy is described as a dispute concerning the effects of the action amongst the scientific community. Public opposition to a proposed action is not an indicator of controversy, nor is the length of a NEPA document evidence of controversy as it is defined in the CEQ NEPA regulations. Based on the regulatory definition, there is no substantial dispute among the scientific community as to the size, nature, or effects of implementing Alternative 1 on the various biological and physical environments (EA, pages 12 to 45). The size of the project and the nature of the treatments are not uncommon for projects on the Bradford Ranger District. The effects of this type of action have been studied (from past projects) for at least a decade. Monitoring information concerning effects and mitigation effectiveness was a key part of the analysis for this proposal. The interdisciplinary team applied the best available scientific information and considered opposing viewpoints. The conclusions of these local resource experts are set forth in the EA effects discussion. There is no evidence in the record of a substantial scientific dispute as to effects of the proposal.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
The effects disclosed in this EA are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks (EA, page 17). The ANF Forest Plan provides for maintaining a diversity of plant and animal communities that will enhance the resiliency of the forest to respond to these changing conditions. This project is tiered to the 2007 ANF FEIS. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. Treatments proposed for this project constitute well-established methods for vegetation management; timber harvesting; reforesting stands; enhancing stream habitat; treating nonnative invasive plants; constructing, reconstructing, and maintaining roads; improving recreation; and protecting water quality, wildlife and rare plants. Much is known regarding the outcomes when using even-aged management on the ANF. Outcomes from using uneven-aged management, such as those proposed in MA 2.2 are less certain. Consequently, the ANF Forest Plan (USDA 20007a, ROD, pages 26, 50) places an emphasis on monitoring these treatments and a flexible adaptive approach to vegetation management (Forest Plan ROD, page 22). The effects analysis shows the known effects, and the proposal does not involve unique or unknown risks (EA, pages 12 to 45).

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.
Alternative 1 does not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future management considerations. Any future decisions will need to consider all relevant scientific and site-specific information available at that time. Implementing Alternative 1 is within the scope of the ANF Forest Plan and its supporting documents (USDA FS 2007) and associated supporting environmental documentation (EA and Cherry Run project specialist reports).

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.
Effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable land uses, along with the effects of Alternative 1, were considered in reaching my conclusion. This included projecting future levels of private oil and gas development [EA, page 29 and OGM specialist report (project record)]. The effects of implementing the

selected alternative do not individually, or with other activities taken cumulatively within the areas affected, reach a level of significance (EA, pages 12 to 45). CEQ guidance on cumulative effects was used to develop this analysis. The Forest used monitoring information, as well as data and information compiled during other NEPA processes, to inform the cumulative effects analysis.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.
The project area was inventoried for heritage resources. Heritage resources were delineated and buffered for protection (EA, page 39). Survey results and a cultural report are provided in District Heritage records. No Native American Graves sites are known through surveys (heritage records), nor were any identified as a result of public scoping or consultation with tribal representatives (Heritage records). Consultation with tribes is ongoing for this project. A cultural report will be provided to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requesting SHPO concurrence for the Cherry Run Project. No significant impacts will occur to cultural resources.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
The actions will have no effects on ANF federally listed ESA species (clubshell, northern riffleshell, rayed bean, snuffbox, sheepnose, rabbitsfoot, northern bulrush and small whorled pogonia) or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA (EA, page 40). The actions "May affect, likely to adversely affect" the threatened northern long eared bat and/or its habitat (EA, page 40). Formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will occur and any responses received from the USFWS will be applied to the project. The findings are based on the scope of the project, the EA analysis, Biological Assessments (project record) and design criteria (EA, Appendix A).

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
The actions will not violate federal, state, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (EA, pages 43 to 46). The proposed action complies with federal, state, and local laws and requirements of protection of the environment, including the Clean Water Act, Wetlands and Floodplains Executive Orders, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and National Forest Management Act. The proposed action is consistent with the Forest Plan (pages 37, 75, 91, 103, 110, 114 and 144).

Consistency with the Land and Resource Management Plan

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires that projects, including those that authorize use and occupancy on NFS lands, be consistent with the Forest Plan of the administrative unit where the project would occur. This decision to implement the proposed action is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long term goals and objectives (USDA FS 2007). The analysis supports my determination that the project can be implemented without impairing the long-term productivity of NFS lands (Mitigation Measures, EA page 10, EA, pages 12 to 45, and EA, Appendix A). Measures to avoid or minimize potential effects are incorporated in this decision, and include Forest Plan standards and guidelines, which at a minimum, meet the requirements of applicable laws, regulations, and Pennsylvania state standards, for the affected NFS lands. For these reasons, I find the authorization aspect of this decision to be consistent with the NFMA.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

My review of the EA finds it meets the requirements of the NEPA, Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1500-1508) and Forest Service regulations (36 CFR Part 220). Forest Service direction in

implementing NEPA and CEQ regulations are contained in chapters 10 and 20 of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 (Environmental Policy and Procedures). The scope of this decision is limited to NFS lands. The effects analysis in the EA for this project shows that the project can be implemented without impairing the long-term productivity of NFS lands (Cherry Run EA). The decision includes measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm including Forest Plan standards and guidelines, which at a minimum, meet all requirements of applicable laws, regulations, State standards, and additional standards and guidelines for the affected NFS lands. Potential adverse effects of the actions will be mitigated through conservation measures.

Findings by Other Laws and Regulation

Clean Air Act {42 U.S.C. §7401 et seq. (1970)}
Project area effects from the proposed action on the attainment of NAAQS are not expected to be significant (EA, page 43).

Clean Water Act {33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq. (1972)}
No significant effects to water quality standards are anticipated by implementing the proposed actions (EA, page 43).

Endangered species act (ESA) (1973) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, 87 Stat. 884), as amended
No significant effects to federally listed ESA species are anticipated by implementing the proposed actions. The Forest Service will consult with the USFWS for the northern long-eared bat and will apply any guidance received (EA, pages 40, 43).

Executive Order 13186 (January 10, 2001) (66 Federal Register 11, 2001) – Responsibilities of federal agencies to protect migratory birds
No impacts to migratory birds or migratory bird habitat are anticipated (EA, pages 42 and 44).

Executive Order 12898 (59 Federal Register 7629, 1994) – Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations and low-income populations.
The impacts of Forest Plan implementation on minority and low-income populations were considered in the Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (pages 3-422 and 3-435), and public involvement specific to this project did not identify any adversely impacted minority or low-income populations (USDA FS 2007). As a result, my decision is not expected to adversely impact minority or low-income populations.

Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 (May 24, 1977) - Floodplains and Wetlands
This project does not propose wetland development or modifications. No significant effects are anticipated to wetlands in implementing the proposed action. Floodplains exist in the project area and will be temporarily affected while stream and fishery improvements are implemented through the addition of large woody material (Project Record). These treatments are expected to benefit floodplains by slowing water movement and increasing water infiltration. Pennsylvania best management practices and Forest Plan standards and guidelines will minimize any temporary effects. No significant effects to floodplains are anticipated (EA pages 15, 43 to 45).

Federal Cave Resources Protection Act {Public Law 100-691 (16 U.S.C. 4301 et seq.; 102 Stat. 4546)}
No known cave resources will be affected by this decision.

Forest Service Sensitive Species {NFMA and the Forest Service Manual (2670)}
Forest Service Regional Foresters developed the sensitive species lists for plants and animals for which population viability is a concern. On November 30, 2017, the Forest Service, Region 9, Regional

Forester approved species for which the population viability is a concern, which included 70 Regional Forester Sensitive Species (RFSS) listed for the ANF, while 23 species were removed from the 2012 RFSS list. Another ten species have been identified in the ANF Forest Plan as species having viability concerns (SVE). These species were evaluated in Biological Evaluations (project record). Treatments to improve forest health are anticipated to improve overall habitat for RFSS and SVE and are expected to be beneficial in the long term. Forest Plan standards and guidelines and/or site-specific mitigation measures will be implemented to conserve these species with suitable or occupied habitat on NFS lands. (EA, page 41, 42, and 45).

National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 et seq.)

The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted. There are no districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places or that the proposed actions may cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources within the Alternative 1 action areas. No significant effects to cultural resources are anticipated with Alternative 1. Any sites of cultural interest identified within the proposed action locations will be flagged and avoided.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 102-271)

There are no wild and scenic rivers that will be affected by Alternative 1 (EA, pages 14 and 46).

Administrative Review and Objections Process

This draft decision is subject to an objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. These regulations are available at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-06857.pdf . Objections will only be accepted from those who submitted timely and specific written comments about this project during scoping or the 30 day public comment period in accordance with 36 CFR 218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

A legal notice regarding the availability of this draft decision notice will be published in the newspaper of record, which is *The Bradford Era* (Bradford, Pennsylvania) for this project. A written objection, including any associated attachments must be submitted within 45 calendar days after publication of the legal notice in the *Era*. However, when the 45-day filing period would end on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, the filing time is extended to the end of the next federal working day. The date of the publication of this notice is the only means for calculating the date by which objections must be received; do not rely upon any other source for this information.

Any notice of objection must be sent to: Reviewing Officer, Attn: PAL-LSC Objections, Suite 700, USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region, 626 E. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202. The notice of objection may be faxed to: 414-944-3963, Attn: Administrative Review Staff, Region 9, USDA Forest Service, Eastern Regional Office. Objections may be submitted by email to: objections-eastern-region@fs.fed.us. Acceptable formats for emailed objections include plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf), Word (.doc or .docx), or any other format supported by Microsoft Office applications. Hand-delivered objections may be submitted at the above address between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays.

Final Decision

If no objections are filed within the 45-day time period for this draft decision, then a final decision may occur on, but not before, the 5th business day following the end of the objection filing period. If an objection is filed, a final decision will not be signed until all concerns and instructions (identified by the Reviewing Officer) have been addressed (36 CFR 218.12[b]).

Contact

For information regarding this decision please contact Rich Hatfield, Bradford District Ranger, Allegheny National Forest, 29 Forest Service Drive, Bradford, Pennsylvania, 16701, Phone: 814-363-6000, Email: richard.hatfield@usda.gov .

DECIDING OFFICER:

Rich Hatfield August 26, 2019

Rich Hatfield Date

Bradford District Ranger

Appendix 1. References

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Appendix 2. Proposed Treatments by Compartment/Stand

Compartment Stand	Management Area	Acres	Proposed Action	Manual Site Preparation	Chemical Site Preparation	Release	Planting	Fertilization
302011	2.2	26.3	Accelerate Mature Forest Conditions					
302030	2.2	12.2	Accelerate Mature Forest Conditions					
302037	2.2	36.1	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
303013	2.2	43.0	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
303021	2.2	55.2	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
303027	3.0	30.9	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
303029	3.0	41.6	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
303036	2.2	32.3	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
304002	2.2	8.7	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	
304003	3.0	12.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
304008	3.0	23.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
304026	2.2	42.9	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
304029	2.2	32.0	Group Selection to Restore Understory Mature Forest Conditions	X	X	X	X	
304034	2.2	32.9	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308002	3.0	30.5	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308004	3.0	35.4	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308005	3.0	11.3	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
308012	3.0	9.6	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
308016	3.0	31.2	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308018	3.0	9.4	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308020	3.0	23.9	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
308031	3.0	21.2	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
308032	3.0	16.0	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309003	3.0	31.0	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309005	3.0	12.5	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309006	3.0	18.0	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
309008	3.0	29.9	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X

Compartment Stand	Management Area	Acres	Proposed Action	Manual Site Preparation	Chemical Site Preparation	Release	Planting	Fertilization
309009	3.0	23.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309010	3.0	9.0	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309011	3.0	26.2	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309014	3.0	14.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
309015	3.0	35.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309022	3.0	10.4	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309024	3.0	14.5	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309034	3.0	32.9	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309037	3.0	11.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309039	3.0	8.2	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309041	3.0	14.1	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309043	3.0	6.4	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
309044	3.0	3.1	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
310002	3.0	14.9	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310005	3.0	10.6	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310011	3.0	12.1	Site Preparation/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310012	3.0	16.4	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310015	3.0	29.7	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310020	2.2, 3.0	15.7	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
310021	2.2, 3.0	21.6	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310022	3.0	12.7	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310025	2.2	20.8	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310028	3.0	14.0	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310029	2.2, 3.0	8.2	Two-Aged Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310031	3.0	23.2	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	X
310034	3.0	24.5	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	
310042	3.0	18.2	Shelterwood/Final Harvest	X	X	X	X	