

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

## ISSUANCE OF A SPECIAL USE AUTHORIZATION FOR ROAD ACCESS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY TO STEPHAN FLINT

USDA FOREST SERVICE  
Three Rivers Ranger District  
Colville National Forest  
Pend Oreille County, Washington



April 2009

This page intentionally left blank

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **CHAPTER 1 – PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION**

Purpose.....	1
Need.....	1
Document Organization.....	1
Background.....	2
Forest Plan Direction.....	2
Related Documents.....	2
Proposed Action.....	6
Project Scoping and Identification of Issues.....	6

### **CHAPTER II – ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION**

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated from Detailed Analysis.....	7
Description of the Alternatives Considered in Detailed	
Alternative A – No Action.....	7
Alternative B – Proposed Action.....	7
Mitigation Measures Including Best Management Practices.....	8
Comparison of Alternatives.....	10

### **CHAPTER III – AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Introduction.....	11
General Description of the Project Area.....	11
Wildlife.....	11
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species.....	13
Watershed and Fisheries.....	16
Visual Resources.....	16
Vegetation.....	17
Management of Competing and Unwanted Vegetation.....	18
Range.....	18
Soil.....	18
Recreation.....	19
Minerals.....	19
Heritage Resources.....	19
Unavoidable Effects.....	20
Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources.....	20
Short-Term Uses Versus Long-Term Productivity.....	20
Specifically Required Disclosures.....	20

<b>CHAPTER IV – LIST OF AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>CHAPTER V – REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	
Figure I-1. Vicinity Map of the Proposed Flint Road.....	4
Figure I-2. Location Map of the Proposed Flint Road .....	5

## **CHAPTER I** **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE ACTION**

### **PURPOSE**

This Environmental Assessment documents the analysis of a request by Mr. Stephan Flint for a Special Use authorization for long-term use and maintenance of existing roads across National Forest System land to access property he owns. In addition, a “No Action” alternative will be considered.

Mr. Flint is requesting authorization to use and maintain a portion of Forest Road 7020100 and a non-system road to provide vehicle access to facilitate timber management and other use of his property.

The Deciding Officer for the project is the Forest Supervisor for the Colville National Forest. A decision whether or not to issue a special use authorization will be made at this time.

### **NEED**

The proposal is needed to provide for reasonable access to Mr. Flint’s property as provided by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Under Section 1323(a) of the ANILCA, the Secretary of Agriculture is to provide such access to non-federally owned land within the boundaries of the National Forest System (NFS) as the Secretary deems adequate to secure the owner the reasonable use and enjoyment thereof.

### **DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) consists of the following main chapters:

Chapter I – Purpose and Need for the Action: describes the proposed action, purpose and need for the action, decisions to be made and significant issues associated with the proposal.

Chapter II – The Alternatives Considered Including the Proposed Action: describes the proposed action and alternatives.

Chapter III – Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences: describes the present condition of the environment and how it could be affected by the proposed action and other alternatives being considered.

Chapter IV – List of Agencies and Persons Consulted: lists the involvement of the major contributors and others who were consulted during the environmental analysis and document preparation.

Chapter V – References: lists the documents or reports that were referenced in preparing the environmental analysis and EA document.

## **BACKGROUND**

Mr. Flint is requesting authorization to use and maintain a portion of Forest Road 7020100 and a non-system road. Forest Road 7020100 is an open road and is currently in good condition. The non-system road is thought to have been originally constructed and used in the 1930s for mining purposes and was more recently used for timber harvest in the 1970s. The culvert at the stream crossing near its junction with Forest Road 7020100 was pulled, but not removed from the site, following completion of harvest activities. In 2008 Mr. Flint received a temporary special use permit authorizing him to reconstruct the non-system road, including removing the sections of collapsed culvert and installing a new culvert to reestablish the stream crossing. Vehicle access on the non-system road is restricted by a gate located at its junction with Forest Road 7020100. Mr. Flint is requesting long-term use of the roads to provide vehicle access to facilitate timber management and other use of his property.

The legal description of the proposed project is the NE1/4 Section 22; SE1/4 Section 15; and the NE1/4SW1/4 Section 15, all in T. 37 N., R. 41 E., W.M. (refer to Figures I-1 and I-2). The affected segment of non-system road is approximately 1,475 feet in length. The segment of Forest Road 7020100 proposed for use is approximately 4,750 feet in length. The right-of-way for the roads would be 66 feet (33 feet on either side of centerline) for a total affected area of approximately 9.4 acres.

## **FOREST PLAN DIRECTION**

Management direction for each Management Area (MA) is provided by the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan<sup>1</sup> which describes in detail the Goals, Objectives, Standards, Guidelines, and Management Prescriptions (Forest Plan Chapter 4).

The project area is located within an area designated as MA 7 by the Forest Plan. The emphasis in MA 7 is Wood/Forage with the goal of managing "to achieve optimum production of timber products while protecting basic resources" (Page 4-101 of Forest Plan). Direction provided by the Forest Plan regarding special uses is to "Grant rights-of-way requests when appropriate" (Page 4-103 of Forest Plan).

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

This Project File is tiered to the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDA Forest Service 1988a), and the Regional Forester's *Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants* amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDA Forest Service, 2005).

The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Colville National Forest was signed in 1988, and will guide the management of the Forest until it is revised. It sets Standards and Guidelines to follow regarding future activities, as well as goals and objectives of management.

The Forest Plan has been amended by the Regional Forester's Amendments #1 and #2 and the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH), and the Regional Forester's *Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants* amendment.

The Regional Forester's Eastside Forest Plans Amendment #1 was issued in 1994 and established standards for riparian, ecosystem, and wildlife for timber sales.

The Regional Forester's Amendment #2 (USDA Forest Service 1995a) was issued in 1995 and identified revised vegetative structural stages of the interim ecosystem standard and clarified the interim wildlife standard replacing those sections of the Regional Forester's Amendment #1.

Both Regional Forester's Amendment #1 and #2 state that the direction contained in the amendment "will apply to the design and preparation of all timber sales on eastside forests, except personal use firewood sales, post and pole sales, sales to protect health and safety, and sales to modify vegetation within recreation special uses areas." There is no tree removal proposed under this project.

The Inland Native Fish Strategy (USDA Forest Service 1995b) established standards for Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) to protect habitat and populations of resident native fish outside of anadromous fish habitat in eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, Idaho, western Montana, and portions of Nevada

The Regional Forester's *Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants* amendment added invasive plant management direction to all National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans in the Pacific Northwest Region (Region Six), and included invasive plant prevention and treatment/restoration standards intended to help achieve stated desired future conditions, goals, and objectives.

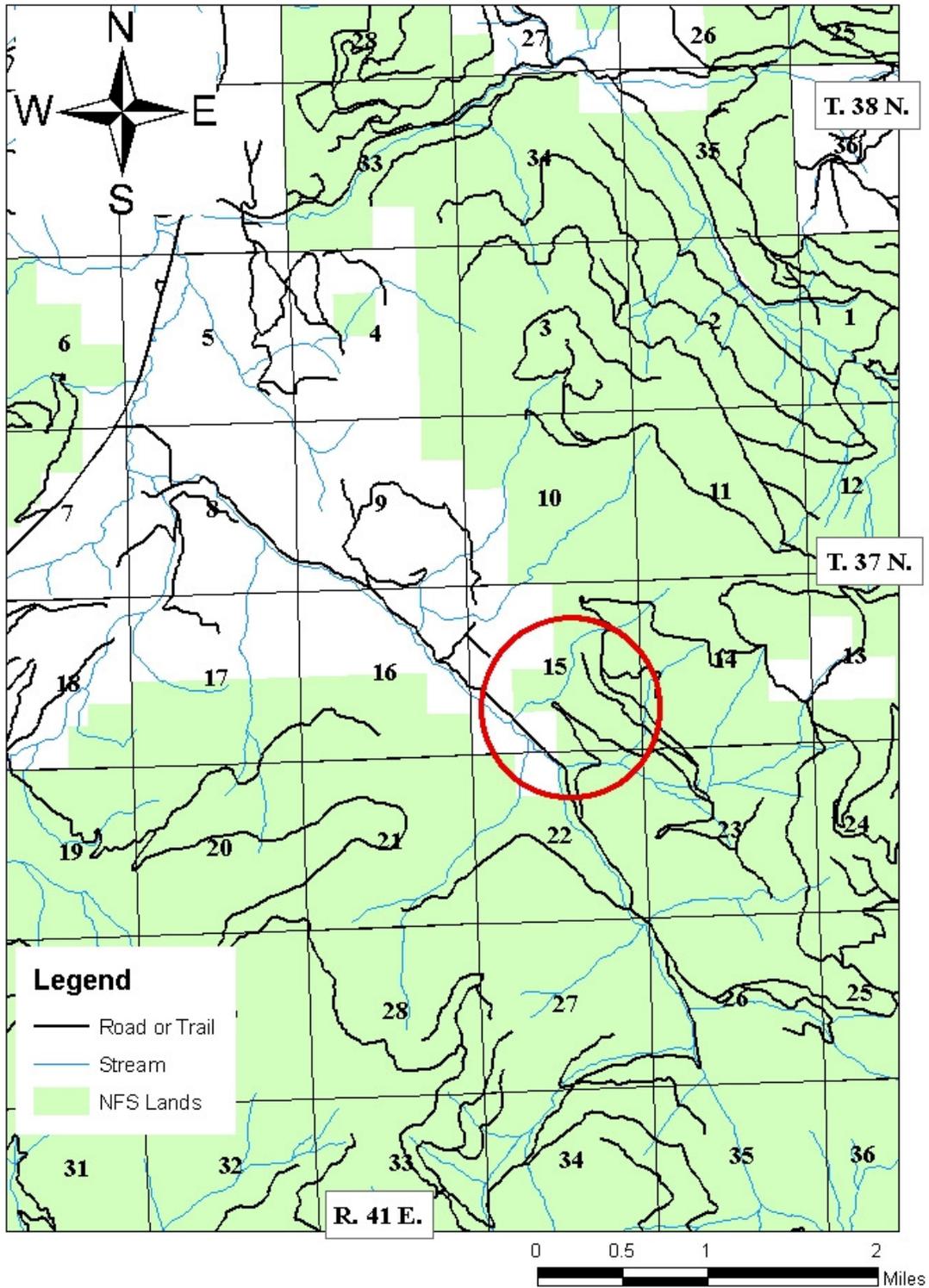
In addition, design of this project is consistent with guidelines provided by the Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (USDA/USDI 2000).

This EA incorporates through reference the:

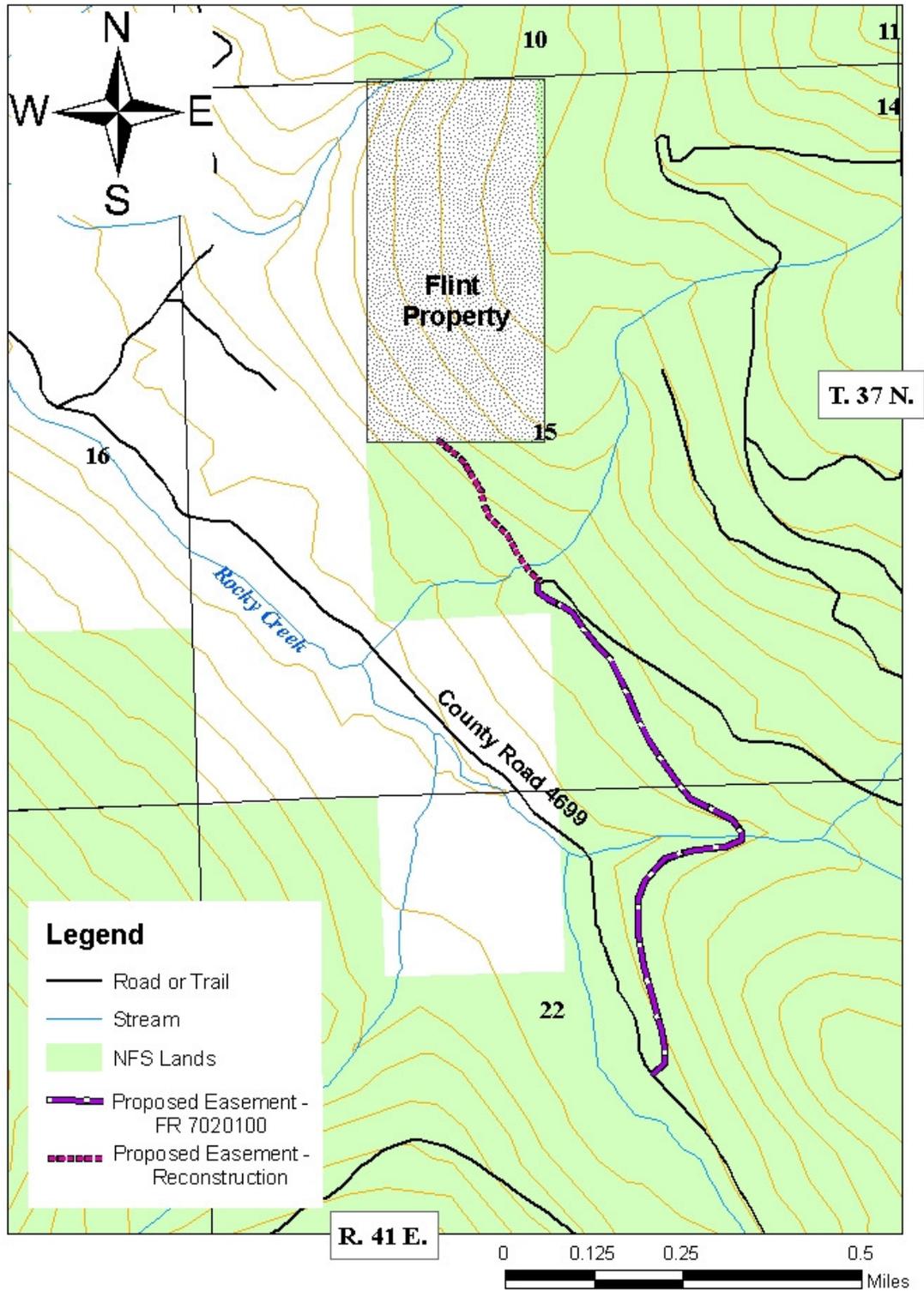
Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants FEIS/ROD (USDA Forest Service 2005);  
Environmental Assessment for Integrated Noxious Weed Treatment (USDA Forest Service 1998); and the

Project File prepared for the previously issued Temporary Special Use Permit.

Figure I-1. Vicinity Map of Proposed Flint Road



**Figure I-2. Location Map of the Proposed Flint Road**



## **PROPOSED ACTION**

Mr. Stephan Flint is requesting authorization for long-term use and maintenance of approximately 1,475 feet of a non-system road and of approximately 4,750 feet of Forest Road 7020100 which provide access across NFS land to a parcel of land Mr. Flint owns.

Authorization may be in the form of an annual permit to eventually be replaced by a permanent easement. There are no plans to change the locations of either road segment. Reconstruction of the non-system road was completed in 2008 under a temporary special use permit issued to Mr. Flint. Reconstruction work included brushing open the road, installing a new culvert, blading the road surface and re-establishing drainage structures. A lockable gate was installed at the junction of the non-system road and Forest Road 7020100. Routine maintenance of the roads would include periodic blading and shaping of drainage dips and ditches, cutting back of encroaching vegetation, and removal of trees within the road right-of-way that pose a hazard to the roads or their users.

As a connected action to this project, approximately 80 acres of private land (Mr. Flint's property) would probably be harvested in the foreseeable future (about 100 MBF over a 30-day period, Berrigan, 2008). The project occurs within the boundary of the South Deep Vegetation Management Project (USDA Forest Service 2006), which is currently being implemented.

## **PROJECT SCOPING AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES**

Public and agency scoping for this project was initiated through:

- 1) Sending letters requesting formal consultation to the Kalispel, Colville, and Spokane Tribes of Indians.
- 2) Publishing information on the project in the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) beginning with *Projects '08, Volume Sixteen, Number Three, Spring Issue, Fiscal Year 2008*.
- 3) Sending a scoping letter describing the project proposal and requesting comments to a general interest mailing list.
- 4) Sending a request for input to Colville National Forest resource specialists.

No comments were received and no issues were identified as a result of initial scoping.

A comment EA was made available for public review between May 6, 2009 and June 5, 2009.

**CHAPTER II**  
**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION**

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS**

Prior to considering encumbering public lands with an access authorization, Mr. Flint was required to examine alternative access through adjacent private property to the west of his parcel. It was determined that the topography (steep slopes and rock cliffs) precluded access from that area.

Two other alternative locations for roaded access were considered, both would require crossing National Forest System (NFS) lands. Both alternate routes would require new road construction and would be longer than the proposed route.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN DETAIL**

Two alternatives were considered for analysis of the proposal. The alternatives considered are as follows:

**ALTERNATIVE A – “NO ACTION”**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that a “No Action” alternative be included for consideration. Under this alternative, Mr. Flint would be denied an authorization for long-term use and maintenance of roads across NFS lands to access his property. Structural improvements associated with the non-system road (gate and culvert) would be removed and the road would be closed with an earthen berm. Mr. Flint would not have reasonable access to his property and the Forest Service would be in violation of the ANILCA.

**ALTERNATIVE B – PROPOSED ACTION**

Under this alternative, a special use authorization (permit/easement) would be issued to authorize use and maintenance of the approximately 4,750 feet of Forest Road 7020100 and approximately 1,475 feet of a native-surface, non-system road to access private property. Vehicle access on the non-system road would continue to be restricted by a gate at its junction with Forest Road 7020100. Mr. Flint would share responsibility for maintenance the affected section of Forest Road 7020100 with the Forest Service and would be solely responsible for maintenance of the non-system road.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

Mitigation measures provide a means to minimize the full extent of the impacts associated with implementation of Alternative B. When the effects of the mitigation measures are combined, the results are expected to limit the degree or magnitude of the action through repairing, rehabilitating or restoring the affected environment, and reducing or eliminating impacts over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action. The mitigation measures are listed within each resource area.

Mitigation measures proposed for implementation for this project are based upon standard practices and operating procedures which have been employed and proven in similar circumstances. The activities would also be monitored to ensure Best Management Practices (BMPs) are being met.

The following mitigation measures are proposed for implementation under Alternative B – Proposed Action:

### **SOIL AND WATER**

Areas of soil disturbed during maintenance activities must be promptly revegetated using the guidelines and seed mixes prescribed in the Colville National Forest Seeding and Planting Guide (USDA Forest Service 2000) appropriate for the site-specific environment.

Any permit issued would include maintenance specifications that would address drainage and road surface maintenance.

### **PROTECTION OF HABITAT FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Location of areas needing special measures for protection of plants or animals listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, or as sensitive by the Regional Forester under authority of FSM 2670, derived from ESA Section 7 consultation, may be shown on a separate map, thereby made a part of any authorization issued, or identified on the ground. Protective and mitigative measures specified by the authorized officer would be the responsibility of the authorization holder.

If protection measures prove inadequate, if other such areas are discovered, or if new species are listed as Federally threatened or endangered or as sensitive by the Regional Forester, the authorized officer may specify additional protection regardless of when such facts become known. Discovery of such areas by either party must be promptly reported to the other party.

## MANAGING COMPETING AND UNWANTED VEGETATION

The following mitigation measures are designed to reduce the risk of introduction of new invader species of noxious weeds. New invader species are defined as those species not currently established on the site or species specifically identified by the Stevens County Noxious Weed Control Board for control/eradication.

The "Prevention" strategy is feasible for this project with regards to new invader species of noxious weeds. The following measures would be included in the design of this project:

Existing noxious weeds within the project area are to be treated prior to the onset of any ground-disturbing road maintenance activity. Any herbicide applications on National Forest System lands are to be coordinated with the Forest Noxious Weed Program Manager. Off-target drift of herbicides is to be avoided or eliminated. All herbicide applications are to be done in accordance with label instructions and are to be overseen by a licensed pesticide applicator. The Forest Noxious Weed Program Manager will provide information on required documentation (spray logs, etc.).

Equipment used for road maintenance shall be cleaned of soil and potential noxious weed seeds and inspected by a Forest Officer prior being brought onto National Forest System lands. This measure is intended to reduce the risk of introduction of noxious weed species into the area that are not already present.

Any seed mix used for erosion control for construction or maintenance must use seed that is certified as "Prohibited and Restricted Noxious Weed Free for the State of Washington" and must be approved in advance by the Forest Service.

Areas that have had ground disturbing activities occur within them are to be inspected for noxious weeds annually for the first three years following completion of those activities.

The non-system road is to be surveyed for noxious weeds on a minimum frequency of once every three years. Surveys are to be conducted prior to seed set and the appropriate treatment measures are to be taken to control new invader species of noxious weeds found. New invader species are defined as those species not currently established on the site or species specifically identified by the Stevens County Noxious Weed Control Board for control/eradication. The cost of surveys and treatment within permitted road corridor is the responsibility of the Holder of the special use authorization.

The Holder of the special use authorization is responsible for management of noxious weeds within the non-system road corridor (permit area). Methods of weed management must be approved by the Forest Service prior to implementation.

## FIRE PROTECTION

The Holder of the special use authorization and his employees or contractors must comply with current fire restrictions on NFS land. Information on the Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL) and fire restrictions may be obtained from the Three Rivers Ranger District (509) 738 -7700 during the normal business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## HERITAGE RESOURCES

The Holder of the special use authorization shall immediately notify the authorized officer of any and all antiquities or other objects of historic or scientific interest. These include, but are not limited to, historic or prehistoric ruins, fossils, or artifacts discovered as the result of operations under this authorization, and shall leave such discoveries intact until authorized to proceed by the authorized officer. Protective and mitigative measures specified by the authorized officer shall be the responsibility of the holder.

## **COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES**

This comparison is based on the ability of the alternatives to meet the purpose and need for the project identified in Chapter I.

Alternative A would not meet the need of providing reasonable access to Mr. Flint's property and would be in violation of the ANILCA.

Alternative B would meet the need of the project to provide reasonable access to Mr. Flint's property.

### **CHAPTER III** **AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the existing condition of the environment in and surrounding the Project Area. It also discloses the effects of implementing the alternatives presented in Chapter II.

#### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA**

The project area is located to the south of Aladdin Mountain, nine air miles to the southwest of Ione, Washington, 17 air miles to the northeast of Colville, Washington, and about 100 miles north of Spokane, Washington. The subject roads lie at an elevation of about 3,100 feet. Figure I-1 is a vicinity map displaying the general location of the project area and Figure I-2 is a map showing the specific location of the segments of the roads proposed for special use authorization.

The project area is in an area described as general forest. Timber has been harvested in the past (in the 1970s) in the area through which the non-system road passes. Anecdotal information provided by the Mr. Flint indicates that the roads may have originally been constructed and used to access the private parcel in the 1930s for mining purposes.

#### **WILDLIFE**

##### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The project area provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including black bear, deer and elk, moose, snowshoe hare, and an assortment of bird species. Habitat exists adjacent to the project area for the following Management Indicator Species (MIS) of wildlife: big game, blue grouse, pileated woodpecker, other woodpeckers, barred owl, marten, large raptors, Franklin's grouse, and neotropical migratory landbirds.

##### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A there would be no special use authorization issued for the continued use and maintenance of the subject roads. Improvements associated with the non-system road (culvert and gate) would be removed and the road would be closed with an earthen berm. Vegetation would be allowed to encroach on the road. Eventually (over the next few decades) the non-system road would become forested. Use of the area by wildlife species would not be expected to increase measurably as the amount of human disturbance associated with the road would only be slightly decreased and the proximity of the non-system road to an open road (Forest Road 2070100) would not change.

**Alternative B:** Under Alternative B, a long-term special use authorization would be issued. Continued use and maintenance of Forest Road 2070100 and the non-system road is expected to have the following effects on wildlife, including MIS:

Marten: marten live in higher elevation habitats than those that occur in the project area.

Beaver: beaver inhabit nearby Rocky Creek. The actions would not affect their dams or food supply.

Big game: the associated action of opening the canopy through timber harvest on adjacent private land would increase forage available to big game.

Blue grouse: the area does not lie on a ridge or at higher elevations occupied by blue grouse.

Franklin's grouse: the area does contain habitat for Franklin's grouse and the proposed harvest on private land accessed by the subject roads would reduce quality on about 30 acres (the other 50 acres are too open to provide habitat). The amount of harvest on private land is not expected to result in any meaningful change in the amount of Franklin's grouse habitat in the watershed.

Northern three-toed woodpecker: primarily occupies higher elevation stands, which do not occur in the project area

Pileated woodpecker: probably occupies the stands of larger trees on adjacent private land and timber harvest on those lands would negatively impact that area. Sufficient habitat would remain on other private land and NFS land adjacent to the private land proposed for harvest such that the population would not suffer a meaningful decrease.

Other woodpeckers and snag/down wood-dependent wildlife: several species of woodpeckers probably occupy the adjacent private land and Mr. Flint's proposed timber harvest would negatively impact that area. Sufficient habitat would remain on other private land and NFS land adjacent to the private land proposed for harvest such that the populations of woodpeckers and other snag-dependent wildlife would not suffer a meaningful decrease.

Barred owl: On the the adjacent private land (Mr. Flint's parcel), individual barred owls could be affected by loss of nesting trees. Given their range expansion and population increase in the past 20 years, the proposed harvest on Mr. Flint's land is not expected to measurably affect their population.

Large raptors: The adjacent private land provides habitat for accipiters. The proposed harvest on Mr. Flint's property would open some habitat and convert it to red-tailed hawk habitat. Sufficient habitat would remain on NFS land adjacent the private land to maintain populations of accipiters.

Great blue heron: no nesting or foraging areas exist in the project area.

Neotropical Migratory Landbirds: several species of neotropical migratory landbirds occupy the adjacent private land. Proposed harvest on Mr. Flint's property might negatively affect individuals, but the scope of the proposed harvest on private land is not expected to result in a meaningful decrease in their populations.

## THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

West Zone Wildlife Biologist Chris Loggers, Forest Botanist Kathy Ahlenslager, and West Zone Fisheries Biologist Karen Honeycutt were consulted regarding this project and a Biological Evaluation (BE) was prepared.

The project area does not lie within any designated Recovery Areas for threatened or endangered species of wildlife. Of the wildlife species listed as threatened or endangered known to occur on the Colville National Forest, potential habitat exists for grizzly bears in the project area. Selkirk Mountain woodland caribou use older habitat at higher elevations than those found in the project area. The proposed project occurs at less than 3,600 feet elevation, on west and southwest facing slopes, and is not in or near suitable habitat for Canada lynx. The stream crossed by the non-system road does not provide habitat for any threatened or endangered species of fish.

Of the USDA Forest Service (Region 6) sensitive species listed for the Colville National Forest, potential habitat exists within or adjacent to the project area for gray wolves, wolverine, pygmy shrews, meadow fritillary (*Boloria bellona*), Fir Pinwheel (*Radiodiscus abietum*), and Magnum Mantleslug (*Magnipelta mycophaga*).

The stream crossed by the non-system road does not provide habitat for any species of fish listed as sensitive.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A there would be no special use authorization issued for the operation and maintenance of the non-system road and Forest Road 7020100. Improvements associated with the non-system road would be removed (culvert and gate) and the road would be closed with an earthen berm. Vegetation would be allowed to encroach on the non-system road. Eventually (over the next few decades) the closed road would become forested. Use of the project area by Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species of wildlife would not be expected to increase due to its close proximity to an existing open road (Forest Road 7020100). There are no known populations of sensitive plants in the project area, therefore, closure of the non-system road is not expected to have any effect on sensitive plants. The stream crossed by the non-system road does not provide habitat any threatened, endangered, or sensitive species of fish, therefore, closure of that road is not expected to have any effect on threatened endangered or sensitive fish species.

**Alternative B:** Under Alternative B, a long-term special use authorization would be issued. The determination of the BE regarding Threatened and Endangered species was that there would be no effect on woodland caribou or Canada lynx.

Grizzly bears have been documented at least twice within ten miles of the project area. The area is not in or near a designated Grizzly Bear Management Unit.

*Direct Effects:* No existing seclusion habitat for grizzly bear would be affected by continued use and maintenance of the roads on NFS land. The non-system road would continue to be closed by a gate so vehicle use would remain at a low level. All activities on NFS or private land would occur within 0.5 miles of an existing, open road (Forest Road 7020100). Prey would not be negatively affected by the roads because the roads already exist: no loss of habitat would occur.

*Indirect and Cumulative Effects:* Access resulting from the road authorization would eventually result in timber harvest on private land, which would open up that area and decrease its quality as bear cover habitat, but would improve the area for bear forage (both berries and mammalian prey): in this case, the potential negative effects of loss of cover would be offset by a potential increase in forage. The riparian areas north and south of the private land would not be affected and would continue to provide cover along stream corridors. Activities proposed in South Deep Management Project that would occur nearby are proposed as partial removal and the entire area would retain sufficient cover to allow bears to move about on NFS land (Loggers 2006, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service 2006).

The determination of the BE regarding Sensitive species was that there would be no impact to the species listed below from the implementation of this project:

bald eagles - The proposed project would not affect nesting or roost sites.

American peregrine falcons - Use steep cliffs for nesting which are not found in the project area.

Northern leopard frogs - Have been found only in wetlands in the Pend Oreille Valley and not near the project area.

common loons and eared grebes - Nest on large bodies of water, which would not be affected by the proposed project.

sandhill cranes - Occupy open, wetland habitat which does not occur in the project area.

harlequin ducks - Occupy cold, high-gradient streams, which do not occur in the area.

great gray owls, white-headed woodpeckers and Pacific fishers - use older habitat and larger trees, neither of which would be affected by the proposed project.

gray wolves - In addition to the rationale listed for grizzly bears, the proposed activities would not affect gray wolf denning or rendezvous sites.

Wolverine - The proposed project would affect forest successional stages but within the watershed is not expected to result in a meaningful change. In addition to the rationale for grizzly bears, the project would not affect wolverine denning areas (wolverines den in high elevation cirques, which do not occur in the project area).

Townsend's big-eared bats - Occupy buildings or large rock faces in summer or hibernate in mines or caves in winter, none of which occur in the project area. They might forage in the area but would not be affected by the project or associated actions.

Red-tailed chipmunks - Occupy dense coniferous forests at higher elevations, which do not occur in the project area.

Great Basin fritillary (*Speyeria egleis*) - Uses forest openings and edges, generally at higher elevations. The project site lies in a valley at low and mid elevations.

Masked Dusksnail (*Lyogyrus* n. sp. 2) - Is a kettle lake associate. No lakes occur in the project area.

The determination of BE is that the proposed project would not lead to federal listing or a loss of viability for the sensitive species listed below:

Pygmy shrews - Occupy a wide variety of habitats, including those found in the project area. The direct action of the proposed project would not affect pygmy shrews.

Activities associated with the potential timber harvest might affect individual pygmy shrews but would not result in a reduction of the population's viability.

Meadow fritillary (*Boloria bellona*) - Though common in the eastern US in hayfields and human-disturbed habitats, in the west they occur in meadows and openings in aspen or pine forests. The proposed project would not affect them, but the associated timber harvest on private land might because the habitat on private lands contains pine.

Though no large meadows occur, harvest on the private property might open the area sufficiently to create habitat. The project would slightly open and improve the habitat but is not expected to result in any meaningful increase in any populations.

Rosner's hairstreak (*Callophrys nelsoni rosneri*) - Habitat for this species (openings and edges in coniferous forest around red cedar) does not occur in the project area or on the adjacent private land.

Fir Pinwheel (*Radiodiscus abietum*) - Most often found in moist and rocky Douglas-fir forest at mid-elevations in valleys and ravines and sometimes in western redcedar. Often found in or near talus of a variety of rock types or under fallen logs. No talus or rock outcrops are in the project area, though fallen logs do occur. The direct action of the proposed project would not affect fir pinwheels. Activities associated with the potential timber harvest might affect individual fir pinwheels but is not expected to result in a reduction of the population's viability.

Magnum Mantleslug (*Magnipelta mycophaga*) - Found in a variety of low- to mid-elevation sites, often with water in the general vicinity, so habitat for this species occurs in the project area. The species occurs on land and is not riparian. The direct action of the proposed project is not expected to affect magnum mantleslugs. Activities associated with the potential timber harvest might affect individual mantleslugs but would not result in a reduction of the population's viability.

## WATERSHED AND FISHERIES

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The road passes through a Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA) for an unnamed stream which is a tributary to Rocky Creek. The stream that would be affected by the project is seasonal and non-fishbearing. It has been determined by Bruce Bailey, Forest Road Engineer, that the 24-inch culvert that was installed when the road was reconstructed under a temporary special use permit should be sufficient to allow flow for a 100-year event. Forest Fisheries Biologist Karen Honeycutt has determined that a culvert that would meet the 100-year event is in compliance with INFISH standards.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, the request for a new special use authorization would be denied and use of the non-system road would cease. Structural improvements (culvert and gate) would be removed, the road would be closed with an earthen berm, and the area would be allowed to become reforested. The areas disturbed through removal of improvements would need to be revegetated as an erosion control measure. Removal of improvements, especially the culvert, would increase short-term sediment delivery to Rocky Creek, but would be timed to occur during the period of lowest flow. Although there would be a long-term change in the type of vegetation present on the abandoned roadbed, it is not expected to change the condition of water quality or quantity of the unnamed tributary or of Rocky Creek downstream. No measurable change is expected to occur for Rocky Creek fisheries as a result of implementing Alternative A.

**Alternative B:** The project as proposed is not expected to measurably alter the quantity or quality of water flowing in the unnamed stream.

The South Deep Management Project proposes some new road construction. That new construction and timber haul may result in slight increases in sediment reaching Rocky Creek. Implementation of this road project may have a negligible additional, incremental effect on water quality. Forest Hydrologist Jennifer Sandoval-Hickenbottom has determined that implementation of Best Management Practices when the applicant harvests his own property would ensure that the project would not add any meaningful quantity of sediment to the streams.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

Forest Road 7020100 and the non-system road are not classified as major travel routes. Forest Road 7020100 is visible at its junction with County Road 4668. The non-system road is not visible from any major travel route.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, the use of the non-system road would cease and the area would be permitted to become reforested. Structural improvements (culvert and gate) would be removed and an earthen berm would be installed. Over time trees would encroach on the roadbed and the obvious cleared corridor would eventually disappear. The long-term effect of implementing Alternative A would be to eliminate an obviously human-made opening that is visible from a secondary travel route.

**Alternative B:** There is no proposal to modify the existing structures associated with the either Forest Road 2070100 or the non-system road under Alternative B, therefore, there would be no change to the existing condition of scenery in the Project Area as a result of this project.

### VEGETATION

#### *EXISTING CONDITION*

Vegetation on and around the affected roads includes an overstory of Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine. Cottonwood is present in the overstory along the first section (lower portion) of the non-system road. The understory includes lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir with birch, western redcedar, and cottonwood along the first section of that road. Shrubs in the project area include wild rose, Douglas maple, thimbleberry, snowberry, serviceberry, ribes, oceanspray, and alder. Ninebark appears along the second section (higher portion) of the non-system road. Ground cover includes yarrow, arnica, Indian paintbrush, wild strawberry, Oregon grape, twinflower, rattlesnake plantain, lupine, queencup beadlily, kinnikinnick, ferns, and grasses.

#### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, use of the non-system road would cease. Structural improvements (culvert and gate) would be removed, an earthen berm would be installed to permanently close the road and trees would be permitted to encroach on the roadbed. The long-term effect of implementing this alternative would be the reforestation of a currently open road corridor.

**Alternative B:** There would be no merchantable timber cut under this proposal. Impacts to vegetation would be minor and would be limited to clearing encroaching woody vegetation from the roadway as part of routine maintenance.

## MANAGEMENT OF COMPETING AND UNWANTED VEGETATION

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The project area is currently free of new invader species of noxious weed species. Noxious weed species present include a heavy infestation of yellow hawkweed and a moderate infestation of sulfur cinquefoil. Neither species is identified for immediate control by the Stevens County Noxious Weed Control Board.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Use of the non-system road would cease and the site would be allowed to become reforested. Eventually the cleared roadbed would be covered with trees which would shade the area making it less suitable for pioneer species of noxious weeds. Encroaching tree and shrub vegetation that is currently considered “unwanted” due to safety concerns, would cease to be categorized as such.

**Alternative B:** Implementation of the mitigation measures identified in Chapter II should reduce the risk of introducing new invader species of noxious weeds. Prompt revegetation with desired species would provide competition for noxious weeds species attempting to invade the area. It is expected that although the rate of spread may be reduced by these measures, existing infestation weed species would eventually spread to the roadbed.

## RANGE

The Project Area is not located within any active grazing allotments.

## SOIL

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The soil type in the project area is Newbell silt loam and rock outcrops. No areas of high soil erosion or mass failure potential were identified in field reviews.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Continued compacting activities (vehicular access) would cease. Ground disturbance would occur where structural improvements (culvert and gate) were removed and where an earthen berm is installed. Tree and shrub vegetation would be allowed to become reestablished. Even with the cessation of ground compacting activity and the reestablishment of vegetation, the soils within the Project Area are not expected to completely recover.

**Alternative B:** There would be no change anticipated with regard to the soil resource as a result of implementation of the proposal. The determination of Forest Soil Scientist Nancy Glines is that primary soil impacts occurred when the roads were originally built. Implementation of the mitigation measure requiring prompt revegetation of areas disturbed during road maintenance would reduce the risk of soil erosion.

## RECREATION

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The area currently provides opportunities for non-motorized recreation, such as hunting.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, the opportunity for hunting in the area would not be measurably changed. Recreational access to the area would not change in the short-term; it is currently restricted to non-motorized means and would remain so if the non-system road was closed permanently through removal of the culvert and gate and installation of an earthen berm. Recreational access in the long-term would decrease slightly as the roadbed was closed in by encroaching shrubs and trees.

**Alternative B:** Implementation of the proposed action would have a no impact on long-term recreation use in the area. The proposed action would not alter access to or through the project area for the recreating public. Although the road would be maintained to allow vehicular travel, it would continue to be gated to restrict that use.

## MINERALS

There are no active mining claims in the Project Area.

## HERITAGE RESOURCES

### *EXISTING CONDITION*

The project area was surveyed for heritage resources and no cultural resources were found.

Anecdotal information indicates that the non-system road was originally constructed in the 1930s to provide access to the private parcel for the purpose of mining. The road has been modified several times since then, in the 1970s to facilitate timber harvest on NFS lands, and again in 2008 to provide short-term access to private property.

### *ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES*

**Alternative A:** Under Alternative A, the request for reissuance of a special-use authorization would be denied and the non-system road would be closed. Structural improvements (culvert and gate) would be removed from the site and the road would be permanently closed by an earthen berm. Eventually, trees would encroach upon the roadbed. After several decades there would be little or no evidence that the non-system road had existed and evidence of associated historic use and human activity would become less visible.

**Alternative B:** Forest Archaeologist Steve Kramer was consulted regarding this project. The area was surveyed and no heritage resources were found. It was determined that implementation of the project as proposed would have no effect on heritage resources.

### UNAVOIDABLE EFFECTS

There would be no unavoidable effects anticipated as a result of implementing either Alternative A (No Action) or Alternative B (Proposed Action).

### IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

There would be no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources as a result of implementing either Alternative A (No Action) or Alternative B (Proposed Action). Areas cleared of vegetation for the roads could revert back over time. If necessary, soils in the roadbed of the non-system road could be ripped to break up compaction as part of site rehabilitation.

### SHORT-TERM USES VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Areas cleared of vegetation to accommodate the roads could revert back over time. Structural improvements maintained under Alternative B (culvert and gate) could be removed and sites rehabilitated.

### SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

#### ***CONSUMERS, WOMEN, AND MINORITIES***

There would be no effect of any alternative on the rights of Native Americans (American Indian Religious Freedom Act- AIRFA), consumers, women, or other minorities, or on the civil rights of any United States Citizen associated with the implementation of either Alternative A (No Action) or Alternative B (Proposed Action). No economic discrimination would be practiced by issuance of a long-term special use authorization for use and maintenance of Forest Road 7020100 and the non-system road.

### *Public Health and Safety*

Implementation of the proposed action would have no effect on public health and safety. Forest Road 7020 is maintained as an open road and provides for public access to NFS lands. That road was designed and is maintained to provide for safe motor vehicle access. Although the non-system road was designed and is maintained to a lower standard than a system road would be, its use for motorized vehicle access is restricted by a locked gate.

### *Unique Characteristics of the Area*

The project area contains no unique characteristics that would be affected by the proposal. There are no: historic or cultural resources on the National Register of Historic Places; parklands (i.e., National Parks, National Monuments, National Recreation Areas, etc.); prime farmlands or range lands; prime forest land<sup>1</sup>; wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. Wetlands and floodplains are present in the area, but they will not be affected as activities would be limited to use and maintenance of established roadways. The project area does not contain Inventoried Roadless Area or land tentatively identified as Potential Wilderness Area.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prime timberland is land that has soil capable of growing wood at the rate of 85 cubic feet or more/acre/year (at culmination of mean annual increment) in natural stands and is not in urban or built-up land uses or water (USDA Departmental Regulation No. 9500-003, 1983).

**CHAPTER IV**  
**LIST OF AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED**

**AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation  
Kalispel Tribe of Indians  
Spokane Tribe  
USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service

**INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED:**

Kathy Ahlenslager – Forest Botanist, Colville National Forest  
Bruce Bailey – Civil Engineer, Colville National Forest  
Kim Di Rienz – Forest Special Uses Coordinator, Colville National Forest  
Travis Fletcher – Range and Noxious Weed Program Manager, Colville National Forest  
Ginger Gilmore – Forest Transportation Manager, Colville National Forest  
Nancy Glines – Forest Soils Scientist, Colville National Forest  
Karen Honeycutt – West Zone Fisheries Biologist, Colville National Forest  
Stephen Kramer – Forest Archaeologist, Colville National Forest  
Chris Loggers – West Zone Wildlife Biologist, Colville National Forest  
Jennifer Sandoval-Hickenbottom – West Zone Hydrologist, Colville National Forest  
Eileen Spencer – West Zone Archaeologist, Colville National Forest

## CHAPTER V – REFERENCES

Berrigan, 2008. Personal Communication.

USDA Forest Service. 1988. Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Colville, Washington.

USDA Forest Service. 1988a. Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement. Colville, Washington.

USDA Forest Service. 1995. Regional Forester's Forest Plan Amendment #2: Revised Interim Standards for Timber Sales on Eastside Forests. 1920 memo from Regional Forester to Forest Supervisors in the Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon, dated June 8, 1995.

USDA Forest Service. 1995. Inland Native Fish Strategy (Decision Notice and Environmental Assessment). Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

USDA Forest Service. 1998. Environmental Assessment for Integrated Noxious Weed Treatment. Colville National Forest, Colville, Washington.

USDA Forest Service. 2001. Project File for Washington State Department of Transportation – Aviation Division – Airport, Heliport. Sullivan Lake Ranger District, Colville National Forest. Metaline Falls, Washington.

USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service. 2000. Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy. 120 pp.

USDA Forest Service. 2005. Pacific Northwest Region Invasive Plan Program, Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants, Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. Pacific Northwest Region, Portland, Oregon.

USDA Forest Service. 2006. South Deep Management Project, Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice. Colville National Forest, Colville, Washington.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources. 1989. Washington Natural Heritage Data System. Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Plant Records. Olympia, Washington.