

Record of Decision  
East Fork Salvage Timber Sale

**USDA Forest Service  
Evanston Ranger District, Wasatch-Cache National Forest  
Summit County, Utah**

**Sections 24, 26, 25, 36 T. 2 N. R. 10 E.; Sections 18, 20, 22, 24, 30, 32, T. 2 N. R. 11 E.,  
Salt Lake Meridian, Utah.**

## Decision and Reasons for the Decision

### *Background*

The East Fork Fire began on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2002 as a man-caused fire within the East Fork of the Bear Boy Scout Camp. Extremely dry conditions and wind drove the fire westward toward the ridge above the Stillwater Fork the first day. Over the next several days, high winds pushed the fire back to the east, with spotting occurring up to one-half mile ahead of the fire front. Decreasing winds and increased availability of firefighting forces slowed the fire once it reached the West Fork of the Blacks Fork River, by which time it had grown to approximately 14,200 acres. The fire was contained on July 18. Suppression rehabilitation and burned area emergency rehabilitation work continued from August until early October.

The wildfire left a mosaic of burn patterns in some areas and relatively large expanses of charred land in others. The fire provided a situation where the commercial value of forest products could be recovered from areas within Management Prescription Categories that permit timber harvest, providing jobs and economic opportunities through harvest and other projects. For example, some stands of fire killed trees are suitable for salvage as commercial wood products. Timber harvest and associated road management projects may help support the economic structure of communities and provide for regional and national needs as specified by Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan Goal #10 (USDA Forest Service, 2003). The environmental impact statement (EIS) documents the analysis of 2 alternatives to meet this need, plus the no action.

### *Decision*

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 2 with some minor changes to ensure compliance with Wasatch-Cache National Forest Plan Guidelines for 3.1A (Aquatic Habitat Emphasis) and to reduce the potential for sediment delivery to streams that have populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout. The changes are as follows:

- The east boundary of Unit 4 has been modified to eliminate salvage operations within 300 feet of the Carter Creek stream channel (reduces unit acreage from 46 acres to 42 acres).
- Unit 6a (1 acre) in Mill Creek has been removed from the Salvage Sale.
- Unit 18 (6 acres) in Mill Creek and the 0.3 miles of temporary road needed for access have been removed from the Salvage Sale.

Alternative 2 as modified is composed of the following treatments and parameters:

- Harvest approximately 8934 CCF (4.2 million board feet) of timber from 19 units totaling about 770 acres of National Forest land on the Evanston Ranger District. Treatment is limited to salvage of dead trees killed by the fire.
- This alternative constructs no new system roads.
- Harvest is limited to the roaded portion of the affected area.
- Approximately 4.3 miles of temporary road will be needed for harvest. Temporary roads will be restored to original contour, seeded and covered with slash or rocks when harvesting is completed.
- Plant approximately 100 acres with containerized spruce seedlings.
- Perform maintenance and improve drainage (including replacement of deteriorated log culverts) on about 20 miles of existing roads.
- Approximately 1.3 miles of road 80299 in Carter Creek will be decommissioned following use for timber haul from units 4 and 5. This road is located on poor soils and was constructed many years ago with log culverts and steep grades that are difficult to drain.
- Keep road 80293 open to public use. This will provide access to Lym Lake after the Mill Creek ford located on private land is eliminated.

General mitigation measures (FEIS 2.4) implemented with this decision are:

<b>Mitigation Measure Description</b>
<b>Soil, Water, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources</b>
Where activities occur on mosaic or high severity burned areas, a field review would be conducted by a qualified soils specialist prior to implementing activities to identify potential avoidance areas. This document establishes Best Management Practices and Soil and Water Conservation Practices as proven and effective measures for mitigating the effects of project activities on soil, water, fisheries, and aquatic resources. Erosion control measures would be left in place for one growing season or until no evidence of pedestaling, rills, or surface soil movement was evident
Ground based activities would be restricted to dry or frozen ground conditions generally between June 15 and December 30. Operations outside of the specified conditions may only occur on a case-by-case basis following consultation with a qualified soils specialist.
As soon as possible following the completion of harvest operations, not to exceed one year, landings would be recontoured to the approximate original surface contour, ripped, and grass seeded with an approved Wasatch-Cache native seed mix. Coarse woody debris would be spread on site to provide for long-term soil productivity.
Skid trails would be water barred with slash scattered on their surfaces, and where appropriate, seeded.
Road decommissioning of temporary roads would require recontouring to match the natural slope gradient followed by seeding with Wasatch-Cache approved native grass species and spreading coarse woody debris on site to provide for long-term soil productivity.
Erosion control measures would be inspected and maintained on a recurrent basis until the site was stabilized to ensure their effectiveness. Additional inspections and maintenance would occur following high rainfall events and prior to fall and spring runoff to ensure their effectiveness.
If debris or slash were to enter a stream, it would be removed by hand immediately whenever there is a potential for blockage of the stream or crossing structure, or if the stream has the ability to transport such material.
On temporary roads, sediment-buffering devices would be installed below all fill slopes within 300 feet downhill distance of streams or drainage crossings.
All temporary roads would be re-contoured, seeded, and cover added within one season of completion of use.
Cross drain spacing (dips, grade sags, or water bars) on temporary roads would be approximately 300 feet for road grades between 0 and 5 percent, and approximately 200 feet or less for steeper grades. In unit 24, all drainages would pass through cross drain culverts.
Where culverts are removed, fill crossings would be recontoured to a stable slope angle approximating natural undisturbed stream banks adjacent to the site, and fills would be seeded with an approved Wasatch-Cache seed mix.

<b>Mitigation Measure Description</b>	
Temporary roads would avoid wetlands. (No temporary roads would be constructed under Alternative 3.)	
In unit 24, any temporary road on the old slide area will be located to avoid large cut slopes.	
Water bars would be installed every 50 feet on skid trails in Units 1, 3, 4, 9, 15, and 16	
In units 6, 8, 10, 12, and 13, harvest activities would be restricted to the normal dry season or winter.	
<b>Visual Resources</b>	
The Forest Landscape Architect would be involved with the planning of all units to insure that visual quality would be maintained during implementation of this project.	
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	
Previously recorded heritage resource sites within the salvage units shall be avoided and protected from logging impacts. Appropriate archaeological inventories and consultation under the supervision of the Forest Archaeologist shall occur prior to earth-disturbing activities and operations.	
Any artifact or structure located during reconnaissance or project implementation would be left undisturbed and reported to the Forest Archeologist immediately.	
<b>Vegetation and Forest Resources</b>	
Standard timber sale contract clauses would be applied, particularly CT6.4 Conduct of Logging, which addresses resource and residual timber protection by requiring directional felling, pre-approved skid trails and landings, logs yarded with leading edge free of the ground, as well as the provisions under BT6.0 Operations. These provisions would be used to protect conifer and aspen seedlings and steep slopes during salvage harvests.	
Surveys for sensitive plant species have been completed. If any additional populations are located, the Forest Botanist will be notified, and mitigation will occur as necessary. This could include unit boundary adjustments to exclude populations, alternative harvest methods to minimize ground disturbance, buffers around populations, adjustments in harvest to meet prescriptions for sensitive plant habitats.	
All equipment that would be used off road would be washed prior to moving into the project area. All equipment would be inspected and approved before operations would begin.	
Noxious weed treatments would occur on roads identified for reconstruction and on haul routes for timber sales. Weed treatments would be designed to reduce existing noxious weed populations and the potential establishment of new populations. The treated areas would vary by alternative, depending on the mileage of road reconstruction, closures, harvest area disturbance and need determined by existing weed populations (see Figures 2.3.2, 2.3.3, and 2.3.4).	
Weed treatments would include spraying of appropriate herbicides on established populations. Ground based spraying would occur in compliance with Intermountain Region's Forest Service Manual 2080, Supplement R4 2000-2001-1. Weed spraying would be timed according to road reconstruction and haul activities. Where access was limited, spraying may occur at the same time as road decommissioning.	
Where timber haul or soils disturbed by harvest activities occur, weed treatments would be financed by timber generated revenue. Spraying would occur immediately before reconstruction and timber haul. On roads where timber haul would not occur, spraying would be funded entirely from appropriations. In these situations, treatments would be expected to occur within 2 to 10 years.	
Wasatch-Cache Native Grass Seed Mixes would be used in all areas except where it has been determined there is a high possibility that weeds may be more competitive. Other Wasatch-Cache Grass Seed mixes may be used in these locations.	
<b>Wildlife</b>	
The Wasatch-Cache National Forest Revised Plan Dead and Down Woody Debris guidelines would be followed where they are applicable.	
Live trees in harvest units would be retained. The harvest prescription would provide detailed descriptions for each stand.	
Timber salvage will not be allowed within active northern goshawk nest areas (approximately 30 acres) during the active nesting period.	
Restrict harvest operations between December 31 and June 15 to minimize disturbance to wildlife	

Site specific mitigation measures (FEIS 2.4) associated with this action are:

<b>Unit Number</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
2	Unit 2 was split from a single unit into 7 small units to avoid the stream channels and their adjacent riparian zones. The harvest in these units will be restricted to the areas above the breaks to the

Unit Number	Mitigation Measures
	streams. Based on the Soils and Hydrology Assessment there should be a low risk of sediment delivery into streams or ponds in the areas and thus little to no impacts to aquatic or semi aquatic species. The streams adjacent to these units do not reach fish bearing streams
3	Install a slash filter strip below the lower part of the temporary road and landings. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and no skidding equipment within 100 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
4	Leave a no harvest 100 foot strip between Carter Creek and this unit and allow no skidding equipment within 50' of the unnamed intermittent tributary stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness there would be a low probability that sediment would reach the stream.
5	No additional mitigation identified. The unit is over 500 feet to the closest stream and impacts to aquatic species and semi-aquatic species should not occur.
6	Unit 6 is composed of subunits 6a and 6b to avoid the stream channels and their adjacent riparian zones. No harvest of timber from the slope west of Mill Creek should occur. Install a slash filter strip below the fill slope of the temporary road at the stream crossings. Based on the Soils and Hydrology Assessment there should be a low risk of sediment delivery into streams or ponds in the areas and thus little to no impacts to aquatic or semi aquatic species.
7	No additional mitigation identified. The unit is over 2,500 feet to the closest stream and impacts to aquatic species and semi-aquatic species should not occur.
8	The temporary road to the unit is over 1,100 feet from the closest stream. No skidding equipment will be allowed within 100 feet of a stream between 8A and 8B. There should be no impact to aquatic or semi-aquatic species because of the flatness of the land and the distance to local streams
9	Leave a no harvest 100 strip between the skid trail and the small stream south of the unit. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness there would be a low probability that sediment would reach the stream.
10	No additional mitigation identified. The unit is over 2,500 feet to the closest stream and impacts to aquatic species and semi-aquatic species should not occur.
11	A 65 foot no harvest buffer between the stream and the unit boundary. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this buffer and no skidding equipment within 100 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
12	A 65 foot no harvest buffer between the stream and the unit boundary. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this buffer and no skidding equipment within 100 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
13	No mitigation is identified. The shortest distance from the unit to the stream is 160 feet. This should provide protection for aquatic and semi-aquatic species
14	This unit is located adjacent to Mill Creek. There is a 200 foot no harvest buffer between Mill Creek and the unit boundary. No skidding equipment will be allowed within 50 feet of an intermittent stream within the unit. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this buffer and no skidding equipment within 100 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
15	Mill Creek is located on the west side of this unit. There is a 200 foot no harvest buffer between the unit and Mill Creek. A slash filter strip below the lower part of the temporary road would also need to be installed to reduce the threat from sediment from reaching the stream. No skidding equipment would be allowed within 50 feet of an intermittent stream channel along the south side of the unit. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip, 200 foot buffer, and no skidding within 50 feet of the tributary stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
16	Mill Creek is located on the west side of this unit. This section of Mill Creek is intermittent. There is a 100 to 300 foot no harvest buffer between the unit and the stream. A slash filter strip below the lower part of the temporary road would also need to be installed to reduce the threat of sediment reaching the stream. No skidding equipment would be allowed within 50 feet of the intermittent stream channel along the north side of the unit. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip, 100 foot buffer, and no skidding within 50 feet of the tributary stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
18	On the South side of the unit, leave a 100 foot buffer between the temporary road and the perennial

Unit Number	Mitigation Measures
	stream. Install a slash filter strip below the temporary road. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and 100 foot buffer should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
19	No additional mitigation identified. The unit is over 1,000 feet to the closest stream and impacts to aquatic species and semi-aquatic species should not occur.
21	The unit is 1,400 feet from the harvest unit to the closest stream. A filter strip below the temporary roads should prevent sedimentation from reaching the stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
23A	The north end of the unit is on flat ground near a small tributary stream and about 1,400 feet from the West Fork Blacks Fork. No skidding equipment would be allowed within 50 feet of the intermittent stream channel along the north side of the unit. A filter strip below the temporary road should prevent sedimentation from reaching the stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and no skidding within 50 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
23B	The unit is 1,700 feet from the West Fork Blacks Fork and has a 200 foot buffer between the unit and a tributary stream to the north. A filter strip below the temporary road should prevent sedimentation from reaching either stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and no skidding within 100 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
24A	The lower end has a 500 foot buffer between the unit and the West Fork Blacks Fork. Most of the unit drains to the north, away from a tributary streams near the south and east sides of the unit. No skidding equipment would be allowed within 50 feet of the streams. A filter strip below the temporary road should prevent sedimentation from reaching either stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and no skidding within 50 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.
24B	Most of the unit drains to the northwest, away from a tributary stream located about 50 to 100 feet from portions of the south edge of unit 24 B. There is an intermittent stream to the west of the unit with a 100 foot buffer. A filter strip below the temporary roads should prevent sedimentation from reaching this stream. Based on previous monitoring and observations of bmp effectiveness, this slash filter strip and no skidding within 50 feet of the stream should result in low impacts to aquatic and semi aquatic species.

Monitoring is also a key part of my decision. Monitoring specifics outlined in EIS Section 2.4.2 will be followed and the results available for public review.

### *Rationale for Decision*

I evaluated Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 using the following criteria in making this decision:

- A. How well the alternatives meet the purpose and need for action
- B. How well the alternatives addressed the issues in the analysis
- C. How well the alternatives meet the Revised Forest Plan direction

A. The Purpose and Need for the proposed action contains the following elements:

- 1. Utilize burned timber and recover economic values and to provide jobs with commercial use of forest products.
- 2. Ensure that stands within the project area will adequately regenerate with forest vegetation native to the area and to reduce future fuel loadings.

3. Provide maintenance and improvements on roads to reduce sediment reaching stream channels and decommission unneeded roads.

Alternative 1 – No Action does not meet the purpose and need in this analysis. Both Alternatives 2 and 3 meet the above elements of the purpose and need to varying degrees as follows:

- Alternative 2 provides the greatest recovery of economic values through volume offered (8,934 CCF compared to 5,631 CCF).
- Alternative 2 maintains and improves the greatest length of existing system roads (19.8 miles compared to 11.9 miles).
- Alternative 2 treats the most fuel (770 acres compared with 593 acres).

B. The issues identified in the analysis and comparison by alternative is as follows:

1. Water and Soils – Effects to water quality, wetland areas, and soil productivity from timber harvest activities and temporary road construction.
2. Wildlife – Effects of proposed treatments on terrestrial wildlife, threatened, endangered, sensitive and management indicator species (MIS) and their habitats.
3. Aquatic and Semi Aquatic Species – Effects to overall aquatic biodiversity, cutthroat trout and amphibians.
4. Recreation and Scenery – Effects on recreation experience and opportunities from changes to scenery and potential OHV use on new roads and in timber harvest openings.
5. Infrastructure and Improvements – Effects on roads from timber harvest activities.
6. Socio-economics – Economic effects of the alternatives.

Issue	Alternative 1 (No Action – Current Management)	Alternative 2 (Proposed Action –New Road Construction)	Alternative 3 (No Road Construction)
<p><b>Soils:</b></p> <p>The fire has increased the potential for accelerated soil erosion to occur by removing ground covering vegetation and litter and creating a hydrophobic layer in some areas. There is an area in the West Fork Blacks Fork with unstable soils and landform where the potential for a landslide due to the fire may have increased. Timber salvage and road construction could result in additional detrimental soil impacts.</p>	<p>Slightly higher risk of excessive erosion due to 50 year storm or return.</p> <p>No affect on unstable landform due to activity.</p> <p>No salvage or road construction.</p>	<p>Detrimental soil impacts on 6.3% of the salvage acres.</p> <p>Little or no additional activity caused erosion expected because of mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Detrimental soil impacts on 6% of the salvage acres.</p> <p>Similar to Alt 2, but less potential activity caused erosion because of fewer acres treated.</p>
<p><b>Water:</b></p> <p>Removal of forest tree cover by the fire can increase erosion, in-stream flows, peak discharges, and sediment loads in streams and wetlands, which may adversely affect</p>	<p>No adverse effects to water quality</p> <p>No increase in existing water yield.</p>	<p>No adverse effects to water quality</p> <p>Very small to no increase in water yield over Alt. 1</p>	<p>No adverse effects to water quality</p> <p>Very small to no increase in water yield over Alt. 1</p>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Alternative 1 (No Action – Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative 2 (Proposed Action –New Road Construction)</b>	<b>Alternative 3 (No Road Construction)</b>
channel morphology and stability and ecological functions of streamside riparian areas, seeps, bogs, and fens. Timber salvage operations, road construction, and increased motorized recreational use could further increase these effects. Road maintenance, decommissioning, and salvage operations could also mitigate some of them.	No effects on wetland areas.	No effects on wetland areas because of design criteria and mitigation.	No effects on wetland areas because of design criteria and mitigation.
<b>Scenery:</b>  Timber salvage and road construction may have impacts on the area’s natural beauty due to reductions in visual quality, impacts of litter and off road vehicle damage.	No change from existing post-fire conditions. Fire reduced visual contrast between previously harvested and unharvested areas.	Harvesting will act to further reduce visual contrast between old harvest and unharvested areas by removing standing dead trees.	Same as Alt 2, but on fewer acres.
<b>Heritage:</b>  Timber salvage and road construction carried out within the affected areas have the potential to impact recorded and/or unrecorded prehistoric and historic resources.	No effects.	No effects because of mitigation, including “no-activity” buffers.	Same as Alt. 2.
<b>Infrastructure:</b>  Permanent or temporary road construction and improvements affect commercial uses, aesthetics and recreation opportunities, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.	No change from existing condition.	Maintains approx. 20 miles of existing system roads. Constructs 4.3 miles of temporary roads, which will be decommissioned after use.	Maintains approx. 12 miles of existing system roads. No temporary road construction.
<b>Vegetation:</b>  Timber salvage and road construction could affect TES plant species. Timber salvage and logging equipment and other off-road vehicle use could spread noxious weed seeds into weed-free areas.	No direct effects on noxious weed species. There is a high risk of weed spread where currently infested and not treated by ongoing weed management.	High risk of weed spread in (1) habitats that have high susceptibility to weed invasion or (2) areas that are disturbed (roads, harvest units). Monitoring and mitigation are provided to reduce risk of weed invasion along proposed new roads and in harvest units.	Same as Alternative 2, but less weed spread risk with no new road construction.
<b>Fire/Fuel:</b>  Future fires could result in high intensity reburns with high resistance to control where heavy fuel loading occurs from logging slash and after fire-killed trees fall.	No direct reduction in fuels; 7,244 acres of high and moderate burn untreated.	Reduces fuels on 770 acres; 6,633 acres of high and moderate burn untreated.	Reduces fuels on 593 acres; 6,831 acres high and moderate burn untreated.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Alternative 1 (No Action – Current Management)</b>	<b>Alternative 2 (Proposed Action –New Road Construction)</b>	<b>Alternative 3 (No Road Construction)</b>
<p><b>Wildlife:</b></p> <p>Timber salvage units and roads could disrupt natural ecosystem processes, fragment large undisturbed areas, increase poaching and cause barriers to wildlife movement.</p> <p>Salvage of fire-killed timber could adversely affect habitat for large and small wildlife species including avians that use this habitat for foraging, breeding, or hiding cover.</p> <p>Removal of fire-killed stands of dead trees could adversely affect habitat for listed sensitive, threatened, and endangered species including denning habitat for Canada lynx.</p> <p>New roads may facilitate snowmobile and other human uses in the winter that facilitates movement by competing carnivores to the detriment of lynx.</p>	<p>Current condition – no change from post-fire conditions.</p> <p>No change from existing post-fire conditions</p> <p>No change from existing post-fire conditions.</p> <p>No new roads.</p>	<p>Removal of snag/future down woody component on 8% of NF acres in burn. A more than adequate, well distributed snag component would remain.</p> <p>Little effect – adequate habitat remains to provide for needs of wildlife.</p> <p>Harvests 770 acres of the burn. Meets FP snag guidelines in units. 87% of potential habitat remains untreated. Meets LCAS guidelines for denning habitat.</p> <p>No new permanent roads. Temporary roads will be decommissioned.</p>	<p>Removal of snag/future down woody component on 6% of National Forest acres in burn. A more than adequate, well distributed snag component would remain.</p> <p>Same as Alt. 2</p> <p>Harvests 593 acres of the burn. Meets FP snag guidelines in units. 89% of potential habitat remains untreated. Meets LCAS guidelines for denning habitat.</p> <p>No new roads.</p>



Issue	Alternative 1 (No Action – Current Management)	Alternative 2 (Proposed Action –New Road Construction)	Alternative 3 (No Road Construction)
<p><b>Fisheries/Aquatics:</b></p> <p>Increased sedimentation from logging close to streams, particularly along sections with steep or unstable hill slopes and loss of shading in riparian areas, stream banks, and ponds, could affect cutthroat trout populations.</p> <p>Potential positive effects of erosion control on fish may not be accomplished without timber salvage.</p> <p>Timber salvage or road construction in riparian areas could have adverse effects on boreal toad and other amphibian habitat.</p>	<p>Continued short-term erosion due to fire.</p> <p>No change from current condition.</p> <p>No change from current condition</p>	<p>Similar to Alt.1. Mitigation will reduce activity caused erosion.</p> <p>Maintenance of approx. 20 miles of roads and culvert replacement will reduce sediment to streams.</p> <p>No harvesting in riparian areas. Temporary road stream crossings will be recontoured.</p>	<p>Similar to Alt. 1. Mitigation will reduce activity caused erosion</p> <p>Maintenance of approx. 12 miles of roads and culvert replacement will reduce sediment to streams.</p> <p>No harvesting in riparian areas.</p>
<p><b>Recreation:</b></p> <p>Timber salvage and road construction may result in the loss of quiet, back-country, non-motorized recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>No change from existing post-fire conditions.</p>	<p>Some disruption during harvest activities.</p>	<p>Same as Alt. 2, but fewer acres affected.</p>
<p><b>Socio-economics:</b></p> <p>The local economy could lose timber values if salvage is not accomplished and done in an expeditious manner.</p>	<p>No forest products offered for sale.</p>	<p>Approximately 8,934 CCF of sawtimber offered for sale.</p>	<p>Approximately 5,631 CCF of sawtimber offered for sale.</p>

Based on the comparison of the two action alternatives and responsiveness to the issues I have determined that Alternative 2 best meets:

- Recovery of the economic value of burned timber.
- Minimizing effects to resource issues; soil and water, wildlife, aquatics and fisheries and recreation/scenery which are very similar between Alternatives 2 and 3. Analysis indicates that mitigation measures and project design will protect resource values. Management requirements and implementation/effectiveness monitoring will address any differences or concerns common to both alternatives identified during this analysis.

A concern rose during scoping and comment on the DEIS related to the effects of salvage logging burned areas. Specifically, there is a concern that logging would further adversely impact soils and other components of the ecosystem that have already been damaged or stressed as a result of the fire. This concern was of primary importance to the interdisciplinary team when designing the project and analyzing the effects of implementation, and to me when making my decision. Because of this concern an on-site review of each proposed unit was conducted by the interdisciplinary team. The identification of necessary mitigation for each unit will

adequately protect resource values. Several proposed units were modified, and others were eliminated to maintain soil and water quality.

I have also considered the scale of the project in making my decision. Of the 14,200 acres burned in the East Fork Fire, over 9,600 were National Forest lands. This alternative will harvest only 770 acres, or 8% of the National Forest acres. The remaining lands (92% of the National Forest lands within the burn perimeter) are contiguous and will receive no treatment, but will recover naturally. I believe this addresses the issue that large undisturbed areas are left intact to let natural processes restore the ecosystem.

I am aware of the concerns over road construction and the potential for sedimentation resulting from their construction and use. This action will construct no new system roads. Temporary roads will be obliterated by the timber purchaser as soon as they are no longer needed, with specified mitigation measures employed to minimize sediment production. Temporary road locations were determined by the ID team during field reviews. I am confident the locations and mitigation measures reduce the risk of sediment delivery to streams to an acceptable level.

### **Other Alternatives Considered**

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered 2 other alternatives, which are discussed below. A more detailed comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EIS Section 2.7.

#### Alternative 1

##### *No Action*

Under Alternative 1, the no action alternative, there would be no change from current management within the project area. No stand structure modification (i.e., salvage) would occur with this alternative.

#### Alternative 3

##### *No Road Construction*

This alternative responds to the public concerns related to new temporary road construction. With this alternative, harvesting would be limited to those areas that can be reached from existing roads. Approximately 5,631 CCF (2.7 million board feet) of timber would be harvested from 593 acres of National Forest land within the perimeter of the East Fork Fire.

Treatments are the same as for the proposed action, but would occur on fewer acres due to the limited access.

### **Public Involvement**

Following completion of the Burned Area Assessment and during development of the Proposed Action for the East Fork Fire Salvage Project (March-April 2003), the Forest initiated public involvement by mailing a scoping document on March 10, 2003 containing a preliminary Proposed Action and conducting a scoping meeting on March 18, 2003 at the Historic Railroad

Depot in Evanston, Wyoming, the community most directly influenced by the fire. This meeting provided the public with an opportunity to discuss post fire treatment needs. This meeting also provided a forum for the public to review and critique the previous season's fire fighting efforts, public involvement during the wildfire season, and other forest management issues.

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, and organizations (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Main issues of concern included water and soils, visual quality, roads, effect of grazing on regeneration, weeds, fuels, forest pattern, terrestrial wildlife habitat, aquatic habitat, recreation, and local economy (see EIS section 2.1.3). To address these concerns, the Forest Service created the alternatives described above.

The Draft EIS was released on January 9, 2004 and distributed to interested parties, including other government agencies. Seventeen comment letters were received during the 45 day comment period. Appendix D displays the comments and the Forest Service response, as well as copies of letters from other government agencies.

### **Environmentally Preferable Alternative(s)**

In this ROD I have described the Selected Alternative and given rationale for its selection. It is required by CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) regulations for implementing NEPA that one or more environmentally preferable alternatives be disclosed (40 CFR 1505.2 (b)). The environmentally preferable alternative is the one that best meets the policy section (section 101) of NEPA (42 U.S.C. Sec. 4331). It is not necessarily the alternative that will be implemented nor does it have to meet the underlying purpose and need for the project. It does, however, have to cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protect, preserve, and enhance historical, cultural, and natural resources.

In the case of the East Fork Salvage Timber Sale, I have determined that the environmentally preferable alternative is Alternative 3.

### **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

**National Forest Management Act** - This decision to implement Alternative 2 is consistent with the intent of the 2003 Revised Forest Plan's forestwide goals, subgoals and objectives listed on pages 4-16 to 4-34 and the desired future condition of the Western Uintas and Eastern Uintas Management Areas on pages 4-176 to 4-191 and 4-192 to 4-202. The project incorporates applicable forest wide standards and guidelines from Chapter 4, Section A4. This decision is consistent with management prescription direction mapped for the area. Under 36 CFR 219.27(c) (1)), no timber harvesting, other than salvage sales or sales to protect other multiple-use values shall occur on lands not suited for timber production. I have found that timber salvage on the lands with Forest Plan Management Prescriptions of 4.4 and 5.1 is consistent with the direction under 36 CFR 219.27(c)(1).

**Clean Water Act** – The Clean Water Act requires each state to implement its own water quality standards. The State of Utah's Water Quality Anti-degradation Policy requires maintenance of water quality to protect existing in-stream Beneficial Uses on streams designated as Category I High Quality Water. All surface waters geographically located within the boundaries of the

Wasatch-Cache National Forest whether on public or private lands are designated as Category I High Quality Water. This means they will be maintained at existing high quality. New point sources will not be allowed and non-point sources will be controlled to the extent feasible through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) or regulatory programs. The State of Utah and the Forest Service agreed through a 1993 MOU to use Forest Plan standards and guidelines and the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 2509.22 Soil and Water Conservation Practices (SWCPs) as BMPs. The requirement for using SWCPs in my decision meets the water quality protection elements of the Utah Non-point Source Management Plan and Non-point Source Management Plan for silvicultural activities.

**Executive Order 11990 of May 1977** – This order requires the Forest Service to take action to minimize destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands. In compliance with this order, Forest Service direction requires that analysis be completed to determine whether adverse impacts would result.

Wetlands within the project area were identified. No wetlands will be impacted within the project area. Potential impacts will be avoided by implementing BMPs as described in mitigation measures. My decision is in compliance with EO 11990.

**Executive Order 11988 of May 1977** – This order required the Forest Service to provide leadership and take action to (1) minimize adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains and reduce risk of flood loss, (2) minimize impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and (3) restore and preserve natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

There are no floodplains within the project area as identified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. My decision is in compliance with EO 11988.

**Endangered Species Act** - This Act directs that all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered, and threatened (and proposed) species of fish, wildlife and plants. This obligation is further clarified in a National Interagency Memorandum of Agreement (dated August 30, 2000), which states our shared mission to "...enhance conservation of imperiled species while delivering appropriate goods and services provided by the lands and resources."

Based on the disclosure in Chapter 4, concerning threatened and endangered or proposed wildlife, plant or fish species, correspondence with the USFWS and the Biological Assessment, it has been determined there are no adverse effects to populations of endangered, and threatened (and proposed) species of fish, wildlife and plants relative to this decision.

**Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001** – Based on the discussion in Chapter 4, Section 4.8 of the FEIS and information in the project file concerning migratory birds, my decision is in compliance with this Executive Order for the Conservation of Migratory Birds.

**Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species** – This Executive Order directs that Federal Agencies should not authorize any activities that would increase the spread of invasive species. Based on the mitigation and management requirements included as part of my decision, the approved activity will not increase the spread of invasive species.

**American Antiquities Act of 1906 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966** – All surveyed and inventoried cultural resource sites in the EFS sale area will be protected from entry and excluded from any resource management activities. New sites discovered during sale operations will be protected by provisions in the timber sale contract (C6.24#). Other non-timber sale related activities would be under the same obligations of avoidance and protection that the law requires.

**Clean Air Act, As Amended In 1977** – Based on discussion in Chapters Three and Four concerning air quality, it has been determined that there would be no measurable effects to air quality in Class I or II airsheds relative to the decision.

**Prime Farmland, Rangeland and Forest Land (Secretary of Agriculture Memorandum 1827)** – There is no prime farmland within the project area. The Decision does not make any changes to grazing allotments found within the project area.

**Civil rights** – Based on comments received during scoping and the comment period for the DEIS no conflicts have been identified with other Federal, State or local agencies or with Native Americans, other minorities women, or civil rights of any United States citizen.

**Executive Order 12898 of February 16, 1994 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice on Minority Populations and Low-income Populations”** - This order requires federal Agencies to the extent practicable and permitted by law to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate disproportionately high and adverse human health effects, of its programs and policies and activities on minorities and low-income populations in the United States and territorial possessions. In compliance with this Executive Order the Wasatch-National Forest through intensive scoping and public involvement attempted to identify interested and affected parties, including minorities and low-income populations for this project. A comment period was held for 45 days following the publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

No minorities and low-income populations were identified during public involvement activities.

## Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at *Appeal Deciding Officer, Jack Troyer, Regional Forester, 324 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ogden, Utah 84401 fax 801-625-5277*. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 to 4:30, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to [appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us). In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Salt Lake Tribune, the newspaper of record. Attachments received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Salt Lake Tribune, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to

appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Individuals or organizations that submitted substantive comments during the comment period specified at 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

## Implementation

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15<sup>th</sup> business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

### *Contact Person*

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Larry Johnson, Evanston Ranger District, 1565 Hwy 150 South, Suite A, Evanston, WY 82930 (307) 789-3194.

**/s/ Melissa Blackwell**

**June 14, 2004**

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for **FAYE KRUEGER**  
Acting Forest Supervisor  
Wasatch-Cache National Forest

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**[DATE]**