

Appendix E

Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

The following list includes past, present, and expected future management actions that may contribute to cumulative effects. This list is not a cumulative effects analysis. This list is used by resource specialists to determine what actions may create effects in addition to the direct or indirect effects from the Mid-Temperance Project.

CEQ guidance states the cumulative effects analysis area should be determined by resource based on potential effects (January 1997 pp. 15, 16). Each resource determined the appropriate cumulative effects analysis area and subsequently which of the actions listed are relevant.

Past actions have been completed and their effects taken into account in the existing condition. Present actions are those where the activity, such as a timber contract, is still operating or a decision has been made to implement an action. Future actions are those where an activity is being planned but not started or a decision made yet.

To assess effects of past actions, CEQ states *“Agencies are not required to list or analyze the effects of individual past actions unless such information is necessary to describe the cumulative effect of all past actions combined. Agencies retain substantial discretion as to the extent of such inquiry and the appropriate level of explanation. Marsh v. Oregon Natural Resources Council, 490 U.S. 360, 376-77 (1989). Generally, agencies can conduct an adequate cumulative effects analysis by focusing on the current aggregate effects of past actions without delving into the historical details of individual past actions.”*

“With respect to past actions, during the scoping process and subsequent preparation of the analysis, the agency must determine what information regarding past actions is useful and relevant to the required analysis of cumulative effects. Cataloging past actions and specific information about the direct and indirect effects of their design and implementation could in some contexts be useful to predict the cumulative effects of the proposal. The CEQ regulations, however, do not require agencies to catalogue or exhaustively list and analyze all individual past actions. Simply because information about past actions may be available or obtained with reasonable effort does not mean that it is relevant and necessary to inform decision making.”

Federal Past and On-going Actions within Project Boundary

- The effects of vegetation management projects on National Forest (NF) land within the Mid-Temperance Project Area were addressed in the following Environmental Assessments (EAs): Dogwood Heartbreak (1997), Red Pine Thinning Project (1998), Sawbill Camp (1998), Red Pine and White Spruce Thinning (2002), and East Side Thinning (2005). Completed management actions from these projects have been accounted for in the existing condition. Approximately 177 acres of pine thinning have not been completed yet (Red Pine Thinning EA).

- Past fire activities include 17 acres of wildfires and 185 acres of prescribed fires and are accounted for in the existing condition. There are no on-going prescribed burn projects within the Mid-Temperance project area.
- There are three existing Special Use Permits for private property access in the Pancore Lake - area.

Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions on Federal Land within Project Boundary

- The Tofte District is planning a Decision Memo for vegetation treatments in the Mid-Temperance project area. The project includes 508 acres of mechanical site preparation followed by planting to restore forested conditions and 123 acres of white pine underplanting to provide future raptor habitat along Fourmile Lake.
- The Tofte District is planning a Decision Memo for fuels treatments in the Mid-Temperance project area. The project includes 201 acres of understory mechanical fuels reduction, 85 acres of under burning, and 21 acres of hand pile and burning, all primarily in red pine plantations.
- The Forest is proposing to conduct prescribed fire for wildlife openings (185 acres) in various locations and site preparation (28 acres) and mechanical pile and burning (25 acres) next to Pancore Lake. The Forest is also proposing understory brush clean-up in the Temperance River Campground to remove fuel hazards and improve campsite visual quality. There are no other reasonably foreseeable Forest Service vegetation management actions within the project boundary at this time.
- The Forest completed a Non-native Invasive Plant Management EA Project and the decision was signed in April 2006. This EA describes an integrated pest management approach for managing noxious weeds on Forest land and potential environmental effects. Weed treatments will occur within the project boundary.
- The Forest's Tofte and Gunflint Districts are developing an East Zone Motorized Travel Project in coordination with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lake and Cook Counties, 1854 Authority, and Grand Portage Band. This plan will address OHV use and within the project area, currently proposes 6.04 miles of road for OHVs (5.64 mi. of OML4 roads and 0.4 mi. of Unclassified road).
- The project area is part of the Tofte Wildland Urban Interface area within the Cook County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). There are low fuel hazards and few values at risk within the project boundary and therefore, no treatments are planned.
- The DNR has requested a special use permit for access to some of their lands in the southwest corner of the project area. We don't anticipate any additional permit requests from state or private sectors.
- The Forest is planning to replace a culvert with a bridge structure over the Poplar River at the Honeymoon Trail crossing. The structure would be an open bottom culvert that improves fish passage. Replacement is expected to occur no sooner than FY08.
- **Past, Ongoing and Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions on State and Private Lands within Project Boundary** (Note: There is no county land within the Mid-Temperance Project Area.)
- State lands encompass approximately two percent (800 acres) of the project area. Based on stand information from the State DNR's website, of those 800 acres, approximately 37 percent is young- or sapling-aged and 43 percent is mature or old growth (remainder is shrub

or open land). Most of the young is red pine or balsam fir/aspens/paper birch. Most of the mature/old is black spruce, cedar, or sugar maple/yellow birch. The State is currently proposing to harvest approximately 31 acres total in 2 stands (uneven-aged regeneration in sugar maple/yellow birch) within the project area in 2007. Based on the DNR's Notice of Annual Plan Additions for FY2007 No. 3, no additional harvests are planned within the project boundary.

- Private lands encompass approximately 7 percent (2,650 acres) within the project boundary. Of that, approximately 38 percent is low density residential or seasonal recreational residential and 62 percent is completely undeveloped. It is likely that some of the private lands in the Pancore Lake area will be developed for individual home sites. Based on aerial and orthophoto interpretation of private lands, approximately 1 percent is currently in the young age class. Most of the private lands in the west half of the project area are lowland and in the northeast portion they're primarily upland with a residential and/or recreational use emphasis. Therefore, the NF anticipates only minimal harvesting on private lands within the project area.

Management Actions Outside Project Boundary

CEQ states "Proximity of other actions to the proposed actions is not the decisive factor for including these actions in an analysis; these actions must have some influence on the resource affected by the proposed action. In other words, these other actions should be included in analysis when their impact zones overlap area occupied by resources affected by the proposed action." Whether the following actions are included is dependent on the resource.

- Devil Trout EA: The decision is expected in May 2007. Most of the project area includes the Mesic Birch/Aspen/Spruce/Fir LE. The LE and MIH information is accounted for in Mid-Temperance EA cumulative effects analyses. A map showing the overlap of Forest-wide proposed projects and decisions with the MBA LE is included in our Project Record.
- Whyte EA: This project is currently being developed and includes a small portion of the Mesic Birch/Aspen/Spruce/Fir LE. The LE and MIH information is accounted for in Mid-Temperance EA cumulative effects analyses.
- Upper Caribou CE (2006), Inga South EA (2006), Dunka EA (2005), Virginia EIS (2004), Kadunce EA (2004), Holmes/Chipmunk (2003), and Junction EA (2002) all include portions of the MBA LE. The LE and MIH information is accounted for in Mid-Temperance EA cumulative effects analyses.
- Silver Island EA has on-going fuels treatments and active timber sales. The information is accounted for in Mid-Temperance EA cumulative effects analyses.
- Crescent Lake EA: This project included some units within LAU #31, which overlaps both project areas. Crescent Lake Project has been completed and is accounted for in the existing condition.