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Plumas Counties  
California

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September 2008



# Sugarberry Project

## Final Environmental Impact Statement

### Record of Decision

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## Introduction

As the Plumas National Forest's, Forest Supervisor and Responsible Official, I have selected a course of action to be implemented for the Sugarberry Project. This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision, along with the rationale for the selection. The Sugarberry Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was issued in September 2008, concurrent with this ROD. The FEIS provides a comprehensive disclosure of the environmental consequences linked to a No-action alternative and the three action alternatives considered in detail.

The FEIS and ROD are available online at [http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/projects\\_and\\_plans/sugarberry\\_project/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/projects_and_plans/sugarberry_project/) Upon request, copies can be obtained at the Feather River District Office, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, California 95965, or by contacting Sharen Parker at 530-534-6500.

The Sugarberry Project Area is located within the administrative boundaries of the Feather River Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest in Yuba, Sierra, and Plumas Counties (see "Figure 1: Sugarberry Project Vicinity Map"). The Project Area is located south and east of Little Grass Valley Reservoir, from Gibsonville Ridge in the north to the North Yuba River in the south. Treatment areas lie between 2,400 and 6,500 feet in elevation.

The *Slate Creek Landscape Assessment* (USDA Forest Service 1999) identified opportunities to improve existing conditions within the Sugarberry Project Area. Several of the objectives for the Sugarberry Project were derived from opportunities identified in this Assessment, incorporated by reference as pertinent information to the preparation of the 2008 Sugarberry Project FEIS.

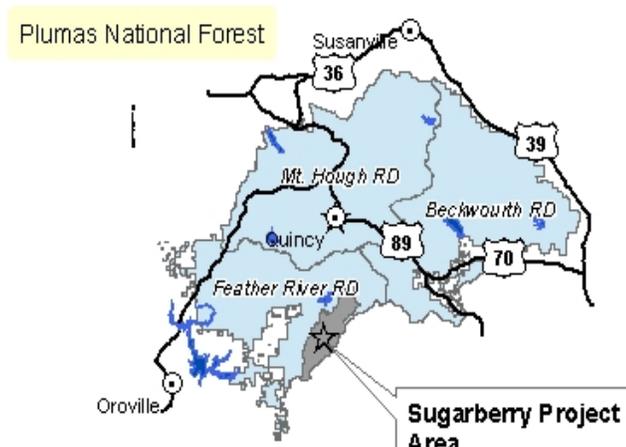


Figure 1. Sugarberry Project Vicinity Map

## The Decision

Based on information disclosed in the 2008 Sugarberry Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the associated planning record, I have decided to implement **Alternative G**, with no modifications.

My decision is based upon careful review and consideration of public comments received on the May 2007, Sugarberry Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), and the environmental analysis prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.

## Description of Decision

**Alternative G** is described in detail in the 2008, Sugarberry Project FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.9; Appendices A and G. Additional information concerning required project implementation and effectiveness monitoring and mitigation measures is disclosed in the 2008 FEIS, Appendix E. Supplemental resource specialist reports in the planning record provide explicit support data, descriptions of analysis methodology and assumptions, along with detailed prescription guidelines.

The following Sugarberry Project activities were designed in conformance with current management direction, as described in the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (1988), Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Final Environmental Impact Statement and ROD (1999) and the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement and ROD (2004).

My decision authorizes the following activities, as summarized in Table 1. Alternative G: Management Activities below, described in further detail in the subsequent section. Multiple, sequential forest surface, ladder and tree canopy fuels reduction activities will occur to effectively achieve post-implementation, desired fuel loading conditions.

**Table 1. Alternative G. Management Activities**

Management Activity Method	Approximate Affected Area
Underburn	370 acres
Hand Cut, Tractor Pile, Pile Burn	250 acres
Hand Cut, Hand Pile, Pile Burn	155 acres
Mastication	750 acres
Mastication & Underburn	205 acres
Thin & Biomass Removal— Removal to 40% Canopy Cover	170 acres
Thin (50% Canopy Cover), Biomass Removal & Underburn	80 acres
Plantation Thin & Mastication	120 acres
<b>Total Defensible Fuel Profile Zones (DFPZ) Fuels Treatment Acres</b>	<b>2,100 acres</b>
Group Selection (GS)	1,020 acres
-% GS ground-based harvesting systems	70%
-% GS skyline harvesting systems	25%
-% GS helicopter harvesting systems	5%
Individual Tree Selection and Biomass Removal	150 acres
- Individual Tree Selection (ITS) Mechanical Thin (not including GS)	90%
-ITS Helicopter Thin (not including GS)	10%
Aspen Regeneration	20 acres
-1-9.9 inches DBH Conifer Removal	100%
->10 inches DBH Helicopter Conifer Removal	50%
Oak Enhancement (Hand Thin Conifers <10 inches DBH)	100 acres
<b>Total Other Treatments</b>	<b>1,290 acres</b>

Management Activity Method	Approximate Affected Area
Sporax Application (DFPZ & ITS)	320 acres
Road Decommissioning	11.5 miles
New Road Construction	0.6 miles
Road Reconstruction	25.3 miles
Temporary Road Construction	21.0 miles
Stream Crossing Upgrades (accessible aquatic habitat miles)	105 miles
Number of Stream Stabilization Projects	2 sites
Number of Meadows Restored	3 sites
Number of Hydraulic Mine Sites Restored	1

## Construct Defensible Fuel Profile Zones

My decision authorizes the construction of an estimated 2,100 acres of Defensible Fuel Profile Zones (DFPZs) ranging from ¼ - ½ mile in width, by treating excessive, highly-combustible surface, ladder and canopy fuels using a combination of underburning, mastication and mechanical timber harvest practices. The Sugarberry Project DFPZs will compliment the larger, strategic fuelbreak system on the Plumas, Lassen, and Tahoe National Forests, as well as adjacent, private-land fuel reduction treatments (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1], and 2.2.4.1; Appendices A and G).

**Timber Harvest (Thin) and Biomass Removal** – Ladder and canopy fuels will be thinned from below. This type of harvest will emphasize removal of suppressed, intermediate and co-dominant trees, with crowns underneath and adjacent to healthy large trees, to achieve increased canopy base height and spacing between tree crowns. These less dominant trees are more prone to fire damage and provide a route for fire to climb into the crowns of large healthy trees. Thinning in DFPZs will reduce canopy cover to approximately 40 to 50 percent in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) Size Class 4 stands (trees 11–24 inches dbh) and Size Class 5 stands (greater than 24 inches dbh), where it presently exceeds that amount.

Conifers ranging from 9.0 to 29.9 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) will be removed as necessary to obtain 40 to 50 percent canopy cover. Commercially valuable timber will be processed as sawlogs. Harvested hardwoods less than 29.9 inches dbh, and vegetation 3.0 to 8.9 inches dbh classified as biomass, will be either piled and burned or removed and processed commercially. All trees 30 inches dbh or larger will be retained, unless removal is required for operability (e.g., new skid trails, landings, or temporary roads). Order of residual tree species preference will be ponderosa pine, black oak, Jeffrey pine, sugar pine, Douglas-fir, incense-cedar, true fir and tree-form tanoak.

Where California black oak is present in treatment units, an average basal area of 25 to 35 square feet per acre of oaks over 15 inches dbh will be retained. In units where the basal area of oaks greater than 15 inches dbh is below 25 square feet, oaks less than 12 inches dbh and greater than 9 inches dbh will be retained, if determined necessary for future recruitment.

Residual spacing of conifers outside of plantations will be a mosaic of even and clumpy spacing, depending on the characteristics of each stand prior to implementation. The residual average spacing of conifers will be approximately 25 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent). Although spacing distances between large trees may exceed 25 feet, a minimum of 40 percent canopy cover will be retained where existing. This will avoid the creation of large openings and allow retention of the healthiest, largest, and tallest trees, while maintaining at least 40 percent canopy cover in California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) Size Class 4 stands (11–24 inches dbh). CWHR Size Class 3 stands (averaging 6–11 inches dbh) and plantations will not have any canopy cover restrictions and will be thinned to residual spacing of approximately 18 to 22 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent), depending on average residual tree size and forest health conditions. This practice will ensure retention of the healthiest, largest, and tallest conifers and black oaks. A combination of ground-based, skyline, and helicopter logging systems will be used to accomplish timber harvesting, depending on terrain and accessibility.

Sporax will be applied to 3 DFPZ thinning units with evidence of annosus root rot (*Heterobasidion annosum*) in or surrounding the treatment area. In these units, Sporax will be applied to all harvested stumps 14 inches dbh or greater.

**Mastication** – Mastication rearranges fuels by grinding woody shrubs or trees and then scattering the material on the harvest site. Shrubs will be masticated, as will trees less than 9 inches dbh, unless needed for proper canopy cover and spacing. Most trees masticated will be less than 6 inches dbh.

Spacing of residual conifers and black oaks will range from 18 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent) in smaller tree size aggregations to approximately 22 - 25 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent) in medium tree sizes. In non-plantation units with larger size trees, spacing may be wider, but 40 percent canopy cover will be retained where existing. This will allow retention of the healthiest, largest, and tallest conifers and black oaks, while avoiding creating openings. Mechanical ground based equipment will be used for mastication.

**Hand Cutting and Tractor Piling of Trees and/or Shrubs, and Pile Burning** – This treatment will manually cut: (1) shrubs; (2) trees 1 to 9 inches dbh from beneath overstory trees; and/or (3) thinning aggregations of 1 to 6 inches dbh conifers or plantation trees. Most trees removed will be 1- 6 inches dbh. Cut trees, shrubs, and existing slash will be gathered into piles with a tractor containing a brush rake head and then burned. Spacing of residual conifers and black oaks will be approximately 18 - 22 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent) to allow retention of the healthiest, largest, and tallest conifers and black oaks, while avoiding creating openings.

**Hand Cutting and Hand Piling of Trees and/or Shrubs, and Pile Burning** – Hand cutting and pile burning will be used to reduce fuels in units located in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA) and other areas where mechanical equipment is not allowed. This treatment will manually cut: (1) shrubs; (2) trees 1 - 6 inches dbh from beneath overstory trees; and/or (3) thinning aggregations of 1 - 6 inches dbh conifers or plantation trees.

Cut trees, shrubs, and existing slash will be gathered into piles and burned. Spacing of residual conifers and black oaks will be approximately 18 feet ( $\pm 25$  percent) to allow retention of the healthiest, largest, and tallest conifers and black oaks, while avoiding creating openings.

All hardwoods and riparian vegetation will be retained. Where operationally feasible, hand piles will be located away from riparian vegetation to prevent scorching.

**Underburning** – Underburning is a prescribed burn carried out under an existing canopy of trees (hardwoods or conifers), designed to consume excess live and dead vegetation on the forest floor and some of the existing canopy. After burning, residual surface fuels less than 3 inches diameter will not exceed 5 tons per acre. An average over the treatment unit of 10–15 tons per acre of large down wood will be retained, where it exists. An average of 4 snags per acre will be retained where existing. In units that are only treated with underburning, multiple burn entries may be required to achieve the desired condition. Underburn units that encompass Group Selection units will not be burned until the harvesting of trees has been completed. In RHCAs, ignition will be avoided. However, fire will be allowed to back downslope into them.

Specific treatments and prescribed burn objectives will depend upon terrain and existing surface and ladder fuel conditions in each unit and will meet design criteria in Appendix J of the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group (HFQLG) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Record of Decision (2004 ROD). This type of burning is initiated when fuel moistures are low enough to carry fire and still be within prescription parameters.

Burning will only be initiated on “Burn Days” designated by the State Air Quality Control Board. Firelines will be constructed around underburn units to prevent fire escape. Firelines will be constructed by mechanical and manual methods.

## Implement Group Selection

My decision authorizes Group Selection over an estimated 1,020 acres. Group Selection timber harvest will occur within and adjacent to DFPZ and ITS treatment units throughout the Sugarberry Project Area. These Groups range from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 acres in size.

Alternative G will implement the first phase of Group Selections on the landscape and initiate the conversion to an all-aged, multistoried, fire-resilient forest. The re-entry harvest interval for Group Selection units is approximately 20 years. In DFPZ units, Group Selections will not exceed 10 percent of the total unit area. Outside DFPZ units, Group Selection will not exceed 20 percent of the total unit area.

The initial treatment in Group Selection units will be the harvest of trees less than 30 inches dbh. Undamaged, healthy, and shade intolerant regeneration (young trees) will be retained. To promote forest health, rust resistant sugar pine less than 30 inches dbh may be retained, where found. Trees larger than 30 inches dbh may be removed on an incidental basis to allow for safe operations. Where possible, Group Selection units will be located to avoid the removal of black oak trees.

A combination of ground-based, skyline, and helicopter logging systems will be used to conduct Group Selection harvest, depending on terrain and accessibility. After harvest of trees less than 30 inches dbh, the groups will receive a series of post-harvest treatments. Post-harvest treatments in Group Selection units will include: (1) site preparation, followed by (2) seedling planting, and (3) seedling release. After burning, residual fuels (less than 3 inches diameter) will not exceed 5 tons per acre. Where down logs exist, an average over the treatment unit of 10 - 15 tons per acre of large down wood will be retained (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.2, Appendices A and G).

## **Implement Individual Tree Selection (Area Thinning)**

My decision authorizes Area Thinning on approximately 150 acres, surrounding some Group Selections in the Project Area. I find this treatment will prevent the spread of insect and disease and reduce overstocking. Units designated for Individual Tree Selection (ITS) will be treated by cutting diseased or otherwise unhealthy trees (sanitation cut), along with thinning from below. The ITS prescriptions include retaining 50 percent canopy cover after treatment, averaged within the unit, and retaining all live trees 30 inches dbh and greater, except as needed for operability.

Sporax will be applied in ITS units with evidence of annosus root rot in or surrounding the treatment area. In these units, Sporax will be applied to all harvested stumps 14 inches dbh or greater. Logging will include a combination of tractor, skyline, and helicopter methods. Slash resulting from harvesting will be treated by underburning or machine/hand piling and burning. Biomass removal of material 3 to 8.9 inches dbh will occur, when appropriate (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.3, Appendices A and G).

## **Black Oak Enhancement**

My decision authorizes approximately 100 acres of oak enhancement within the Sugarberry Project Area. Thinning will reduce conifer encroachment into oak stands, reduce fuels, and increase the overall growth of remaining oak. Thinning will remove primarily brush and small conifers 1 - 10 inches dbh (though generally less than 4 inches dbh). Smaller oaks (generally less than 4 inches dbh) may be hand-thinned in the oak enhancement units if needed to reduce overstocking. Larger oaks will be retained. Slash created from hand cut material will be piled and then burned. Some piles may be retained to provide wildlife habitat (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.4; Appendices A and G).

## **Aspen Stand Enhancement**

My decision authorizes 20 acres of aspen enhancement in the Howland Flat area. Aspen enhancement will remove competing conifers, including large trees greater than 30 inches dbh to increase water, growing space, and light available for young aspen.

Not all acres within aspen units will be treated, due to the absence of conifer trees in wet areas or meadows. Of the total 20 acres of aspen treatment, large conifers will be removed from approximately 12 acres. I recognize up to 180 trees greater than 30 inches dbh may be removed.

In Sugarberry Aspen (SBA) - Unit 1, conifers greater than 9 inches dbh will be removed with ground-based harvesting systems. In units SBA-3, SBA-4 and SBA-5 conifers greater than 9 inches dbh will be removed by helicopter. Conifers less than 9 inches dbh will be hand cut. Some conifers may be retained, if deemed to be performing critical hydrologic services (for example, contributing to channel stability or riparian conditions).

In units SBA-2, no trees greater than 10 inches dbh will be removed. Trees less than 10 inches dbh will be removed by hand-cutting to protect archeological sites where ground disturbance is prohibited.

In unit SBA-5, approximately one acre with extensive evidence of deer browse will be fenced using manual labor. One or more settling ponds will be constructed to capture sediment eroding from the face of an old hydraulic pit, and stream diversions at Upper Dutch Diggings. Work will be performed with an excavator, followed by manual revegetation (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.5; Appendices A and G).

## Transportation Improvements

My decision authorizes transportation system improvements to: (1) provide needed access for completion of timber harvest and fuel reduction activities, and (2) contribute to watershed restoration, meadow enhancement, fish passage improvement, and streambank stabilization.

I authorize the following road work to allow access to DFPZ, Group Selection, and Individual Tree Selection treatment units. Improvements will include approximately 0.6 mile of new classified system roads construction and an estimated 25.3 miles of existing system roads reconstruction prior to project use under Alternative G. Reconstruction will consist of brushing, blading the road surface, improving drainage, and replacing/upgrading culverts where needed. In addition, approximately 21.0 miles of temporary spur roads will be constructed. All temporary spurs will be decommissioned after the project is completed; all reopened spurs will be closed with barriers and allowed to revegetate. Harvest landings in Group Selection units and DFPZs will be constructed or reconstructed as needed. My decision permits construction of up to 191 new landings, and use of up to 62 existing landings to implement this project. Landings will be sub-soiled upon project completion, except where sensitive aquatic or riparian areas might be negatively affected.

I authorize the following treatments to contribute to watershed restoration, meadow enhancement, fish passage improvement, and streambank stabilization activities. Improvements will include approximately 11.5 miles of unauthorized road decommissioning (not a part of the existing Forest roads system), whereupon the roadbed is restored to a natural condition. The roadbed will be stabilized or removed, culverts will be removed, and stream crossings will be stabilized.

In November 2005, the Forest Service revised its travel management regulations to require designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use, including off-highway vehicles (OHV). As part of this process, the Plumas National Forest completed a forest-wide inventory. Roads authorized for restoration under the Sugarberry Project were not identified during the inventory process and are not being considered in the travel management process (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.6; Appendices A and G).

## Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystem Restoration

My decision authorizes restoration activities to provide access to additional aquatic and riparian suitable habitat, and to reduce risks of road washouts and associated sediment delivery during flood events.

**Stream Crossing Improvements** – Restoration of 5 stream crossings will provide fish access to upstream habitat (refer to Table 1.1). Improvements will consist of installing new and generally larger structures compatible with the configuration, grade, and flow of the stream. Larger-diameter culverts will allow water to flow at lower velocities, accommodate larger flows and debris during flood events, and cause less up- and downstream disruption of the streambanks and channels (FEIS, Section 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.7 [Table 2-2]; Appendix G).

Table 1.1 Stream Crossing Improvements

Stream Crossing Location	Improvement Activities
1. Potosi Creek SIE800 road crossing T22N, R10E, Sec 32 SE ¼	Culvert replacement
2. Pearson Ravine SIE800 road crossing T22N, R10E, Sec 32 NE ¼	The crossing will be improved using one of three options: 1. Bottomless arch culvert 2. Vented ford (low water crossing with a channel to allow fish passage) 3. Low water crossing to stabilize road (concrete slab in current crossing location)
3. Fish Meadow 20N20 road crossing T20N, R8E, Sec 24, NE 1/4	Replace or modify the weir and culvert. Streambank stabilization up- and downstream of the crossing at the time the culvert is replaced
4. Rock Creek 20N95 road crossing T20N, R9E, Sec 16, NW 1/4	Replace the culvert or modifying the crossing
5. Gold Run 21N90 road crossing T20N, R9E, Sec 5, SW 1/4	Culvert replacement

***Stream Stabilization*** – Restoration will include the modification of Gold Run Dam (a historic structure), to allow Gold Run Creek to resume its previous course and return to a more natural gradient. The channel will be reconstructed to a step-pool configuration using heavy equipment. Fish Meadow, 20N20 road crossing will be restored up and downstream of the road crossing using rock, coir (coconut fiber) logs, and vegetation. Follow-up restoration, including surface restoration and revegetation, will be performed by field crews (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3 [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.7; Appendix G).

***Meadow Enhancement*** – Restoration of Onion Creek Meadow will stabilize headcuts and unstable channel and stream banks using rock or coir logs. Invading conifers up to 9 inches dbh will be removed manually, and roads and skid trails adjacent to the meadow and a tributary stream will be closed or obliterated and revegetated. Vehicle access to the meadow surface will be blocked. In addition, old fence material that is no longer needed will be removed. Gibsonville Meadow will also be restored using barriers (rocks) to block vehicle access to the northern portion of the meadow. Stream channels will be stabilized using rocks, logs, coir (coconut fiber) logs and/or revegetated (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3. [Table 2-1] and 2.2.4.7; Appendix G).

***Hydraulic Mine Site Restoration*** – Improved watershed condition will consist of restoring portions of a historic hydraulic mine site at Upper Dutch Diggings, on Rabbit Creek north of La Porte. One or more settling ponds will be constructed to capture sediment eroding from the face of an old hydraulic pit, and stream diversions that are eroding roadbeds will be corrected. Work will be performed with an excavator, followed by revegetation by hand (FEIS, Section 2.2.4.7; Appendix G).

**Monitoring and Mitigation:** My decision will employ pertinent mitigation measures to minimize, to the extent feasible, the potential for operational generated resource impacts. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring will provide useful information to guide future planning and decision-making (FEIS, Section 2.5; Appendix E).

**Permits, Licenses, Grants, and Authorizations:** The California Department of Fish and Game requires a 404 permit for fish passage restoration. The Gold Run Dam modification and Hydraulic Mine Restoration Sites, partially located on private land, will require a cooperative agreement with the landowner.

Smoke permits are required from the Northern Sierra and Feather River Air Quality Management Districts prior to any prescribed burning. Timber Harvest Activity Waivers are required from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. All necessary road license agreements for access across private land have been secured (FEIS, Section 1.10).

## Reasons for the Decision

***Protect Rural Communities and Forest Ecosystems from High-Intensity Wildfires*** – My decision will implement effective treatments to reduce hazardous fuels around rural communities by creating Defensible Fuel Profile Zones (DFPZs), while retaining the majority of the canopy cover provided by medium and large size trees. Environmental conditions in the DFPZs will have fuel loads light enough and canopy base height high enough to cause approaching crown fires to drop to the surface (ground). This will assist firefighters in effectively employing direct attack suppression tactics during 90th percentile weather conditions (FEIS, Sections 1.5.2, 2.2.3, 2.7 and 3.3).

DFPZ treatments will reduce existing fuel loading, currently estimated at 11.1 tons per acre, to approximately 5.2 tons per acre post-operations. The present fire type classification will be altered from “crown” to “surface” with corresponding lower flame lengths, from greater than 6 feet under current conditions to less than 4 feet post-operations. Canopy base height will be enhanced from an average 2.5 feet to approximately 19.8 feet above ground level (FEIS, Sections 2.7 [Table 2-5] and 3.3.3).

The Sugarberry Project will provide a critical link in the Defensible Fuel Profile Zone (DFPZ) network in an area with natural features that contribute to dangerous firefighting. Sugarberry DFPZs will connect with other fuel breaks constructed as part of the Bald Onion, Upper and Lower Slate, South Fork, and Slapjack Projects on the Feather River Ranger District (FEIS, Section 3.3).

Alternative G will substantially alter fire behavior, based on fuel modeling projections (FEIS, Section 3.3.3 – 3.3.8). Additionally, front-line suppression observations and post-wildfire field reviews of the 2003 Peterson Fire on the Feather River District, the 2005 Bell fire on the Beckwourth Ranger District and the 2007 Moonlight Fire on the Mount Hough Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest, indicates pre-suppression practices aid in firefighting. The combination of reduced fuel loads and open forest canopy improves effectiveness of retardant applications, reduces surface fire spread and rates, and allows for the use of more effective, safe, direct attack suppression tactics. I find it is necessary to reduce the number of trees in overstocked forest stands, particularly those less than 10 inches dbh, to enhance the efficiency of hazardous fuels reduction treatment in the Sugarberry Project Area.

***Promote a Healthy All-aged, Multistoried, Fire Resilient Forest*** – My decision will enhance the development of an uneven-aged, multistory forest by implementing Group Selection, Area Thinning or Individual Tree Selection (ITS) and DFPZs. I recognize that these treatments will not fully restore the landscape, but I consider it an important first step toward a landscape transition to different stand structure and species composition. Fuels reduction and silvicultural forest health treatments will shift forest stands across the Project Area toward a more fire resilient condition, by promoting regeneration of fire resistant, shade intolerant species, such as Jeffrey pine and ponderosa pine (FEIS, Sections 1.5.2, 2.2.3 [Table 2-1], 2.7 and 3.3).

The thin from below silvicultural prescription will act to decrease tree density, leading to improved tree vigor and growth. Stand densities will be decreased by removing trees less than 9 inches dbh in Individual Tree Selection (ITS) and DFPZ units, and through the removal of trees 9 – 30 inches dbh in patches in Group Selection units. Intermediate or suppressed trees will be removed from the stand, subsequently decreasing the risk of mortality related to drought, insects and disease.

Where CWHR 4 and 5 Size Class conditions exist within DFPZ and ITS units, basal area will be reduced from an average 280 square feet per acre to 200 - 260 square feet per acre. Most of the 1,000 understory trees per acre less than 10 inches dbh will be removed to lower stocking levels. An estimated 60 -100 trees per acre greater than 10 inches dbh will be retained. In Group Selection units, approximately 11-12 trees per acre greater than 30 inches dbh will be retained to maintain an overall stand basal area of 120 square feet per acre. Forest canopies will be reduced from an average 60 percent to 40 – 50 percent in DFPZs and ITS units. Within the Project Area, Group Selection will convert an estimated 2 percent of the forested stands in mid-seral conditions in the Project Area to early seral conditions. The application of DFPZs and ITS will convert 1 percent of the stands in Project Area from mid-seral to late-seral conditions (FEIS, Sections 2.7 [Table 2-5] and 3.3).

***Contribute to the Stability and Economic Health of Rural Communities*** – My decision will provide timber products that will contribute to the economic stability of rural communities by providing 518 jobs, while generating a net harvest value of \$356,032.00 and corresponding \$22,288,021.00 of employee related income (FEIS, Section 2.7 [Table 2-5] and 3.5).

***Promotes the Health of Unique Plant Communities, Specifically Aspen and Black Oak*** – Long-term ecosystem health will be enhanced by reducing conifer basal area, trees per acre and canopy cover to increase adult tree, sprouting and regeneration survival rates. The removal of conifer trees overtopping aspen across 20 acres will act to stimulate aspen sprouting and shift species composition. The existing conifer-dominated forest (presently 87 percent of the total basal area, with aspen averaging 25 percent of the total trees per acre) will shift to an aspen-dominated forest (71 percent of the total basal area post operations, with aspen composing 85 percent of the total trees per acre).

Black oak stand restoration applied to 100 acres will promote a more natural forest ecosystem by maintaining and enhancing growth and mast production, providing a wide variety of wildlife species with shelter, nesting sites and travel corridors (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3, 2.2.4.4, 2.2.4.5, 2.7 [Table 2-5], 3.3.6.4 and 3.11.4.3).

***Promote Healthy Aquatic and Riparian Ecosystems*** – My decision will reconstruct approximately 25.3 road miles and decommission approximately 11.5 miles of system roads to improve water quality for aquatic species. Restoration will provide an estimated 16.5 miles of connectivity of high-quality spawning and rearing habitat for riparian and aquatic-dependent species. My decision will improve 7 acres of meadow habitat to enhance plant and wildlife diversity, and provide for effective sediment retention.

Meadow restoration will remove encroaching conifers and stabilize degraded streambanks, helping to reverse the loss of meadow habitat (FEIS, Sections 2.2.3, 2.2.4.7, 3.3 and 3.4).

I find restoring portions of a historic hydraulic mine site and diversion channel at Upper Dutch Diggings on Rabbit Creek, will reduce water degradation and improve aquatic habitat and access as well (FEIS, Section 3.9).

***Cumulative Watershed Effects; Avoid Moving Subwatersheds Near or Over the Threshold of Concern*** – My decision balances the need for long-term resource protection and improved road access to wildland areas, to facilitate pre-suppression, forest health and watershed restoration, and provide for future wildfire suppression to protect nearby rural communities.

My decision will not result in an increase in the number of subwatersheds currently over the Threshold of Concern (TOC) for cumulative watershed effects (CWEs). The TOC serves as a "yellow flag" indicator for potential increased risk of significant adverse cumulative effects. Although my decision will increase risks in 2 subwatersheds, causing them to approach TOC, I find predicted short-term, minor increases in erosion and sedimentation rates related to implementing the Project, will be mitigated or entirely eliminated by the application of required standards and guidelines and Best Management Practices (FEIS, Sections 2.2.4.9, 2.5, 2.7 and 3.9).

I recognize my decision authorizes road decommissioning, totaling approximately 11.5 miles, specifically selected to reduce the Equivalent Roaded Area (ERA) values, an indicator of cumulative watershed effects (CWEs). The reconstruction of 25.3 miles of road, upgrade of stream crossing and stream channel stabilization will reduce erosion and sedimentation rates. Although the percent reductions in proportion to the area affected is small, transportation improvements coupled with road decommissioning will cause up to a 4 percent net reduction in sediment mobilization and delivery.

I find aquatic and riparian restoration at Gold Run Creek and Fish Meadow will increase the percent of area in stable and vegetated condition from the existing 0 – 25 percent, to greater than 50 percent. Similarly, I find restoration at Upper Dutch Diggings will increase the percent of area in stable and vegetated condition from the existing less than 50 percent, to greater than 50 percent. My decision to increase sediment catchment capacity at Upper Dutch Diggings will allow for 25,000 – 50,000 cubic yards. Combined, these restoration activities will aid in improving water quality (FEIS, Sections 2.7 [Table 2-5] and 3.9).

## **Public Involvement**

An extensive public involvement process was conducted for the Sugarberry Project. The Forest Service used a variety of methods to solicit input and comments from members of the public, other public agencies, tribes, adjacent property owners and organizations.

The Forest Service met with representatives of the La Porte Homeowner Associations at a Fire Safe Council/Forest Service hosted meeting in September 2005, to solicit public issues. The Sugarberry Project was also described in the Plumas National Forest, Schedule of Proposed Actions, October, 2005 edition.

To announce the latest environmental analysis efforts on the Sugarberry Project, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register on June 1, 2006. A legal notice was posted in Quincy's, Feather River Bulletin Newspaper and Oroville's Mercury-Register Newspaper on June 21, 2006. On June 23, 2006, letters inviting comment were sent to Native American entities interested in projects located on this portion of the Plumas National Forest, including federally recognized tribal governments and tribal groups currently applying for federal recognition. On June 19, 2006, invitation-to-comment letters were distributed to 1,200+ interested individuals, groups, residents, and relevant federal, state, and county land management agencies.

The Sugarberry Project was also presented at a Plumas, Yuba and Sierra Counties Fire Safe Council's meeting, and discussed with Soper-Wheeler Company and Sierra County Public Works in spring/summer 2006. Public meeting invitation letters were mailed on July 20, 2006, along with public meetings flyers, inviting those interested in attending a U.S. Forest Service-hosted public meeting scheduled for August 19, 2006. Fifty-four people attended the August 19, 2006 meeting, held at the Fire House in the town of La Porte.

On May 29, 2007, the Draft EIS was distributed to aforementioned individuals and organizations. On June 15, 2007, the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the May 2007, Sugarberry Project Draft EIS (DEIS) transmittal was submitted for posting in the Federal Register to initiate the 45-day comment period. The comment period on the DEIS ended July 30, 2007. During the 45-day comment period, three private organizations, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Quincy Library Group Forester Counties Representative submitted written comments on the Sugarberry DEIS (FEIS, Sections 1.9, 1.9.1, 1.9.2 and 4.2). The US Forest Service responses to comments are included in the Sugarberry Project FEIS, Appendix H.

In response to comments on the DEIS, the US Forest Service developed Alternative G. Alternative G (the FEIS Preferred and Selected Alternative) includes all proposed activities as designed under Alternative C, along with an added 6.8 miles of road decommissioning. On December 18, 2007, an informational and request for comment letter was circulated to interested individuals and organizations describing Alternative G. The Forest Service received no comments (FEIS, Section 1.9.1).

## **Alternatives Considered**

In addition to the selected Alternative G, I considered three other alternatives in detail, briefly described below. They include a No-action alternative and two action alternatives (FEIS, Section 2.2). Following the descriptions, I discuss in detail why I did not choose each of these other alternatives.

**Alternative A** – Under the No-action Alternative, the application of fuels treatments, DFPZ construction, Group Selection harvests and Individual Tree Selection (ITS), transportation system improvements, forest health and watershed restoration will NOT be implemented to accomplish the purpose and need (FEIS, Section 2.2.2).

**Alternative B** – This action Alternative employs 2,100 acres of Defensible Fuels Profile Zones, 1,040 acres of Group Selection and 155 acres of Individual Tree Selection practices to protect rural communities and forest ecosystems from high-intensity wildfire and to promote healthy, all-age, multistoried fire resilient forests.

It also incorporates Project Area access improvements via 0.6 miles of road construction, 25.3 miles of road reconstruction, and 21.7 miles of temporary road construction. Alternative B includes 4.7 miles of road decommission to reduce risks of adverse cumulative watershed effects (CWEs).

Alternative B also includes 16.5 miles of stream crossing infrastructure upgrades, 2 stream stabilizations, 1 hydraulic mine site restoration, and 7 acres of meadow enhancement to improve watershed, aquatic and riparian resources. Additionally, this Alternative functions to restore 20 acres of Aspen and 100 acres of California black oak forests (FEIS, Section 2.2.3 and 2.4, Appendices A and G).

**Alternative C** – Alternative C reduces the extent of and method of activities compared to Alternative B, to lower the risk of inducing cumulative watershed effects (CWEs) in subwatersheds already over the Threshold of Concern (TOC), in order to protect on-site and downstream aquatic and riparian beneficial uses and values.

This action Alternative applies 2,100 acres of Defensible Fuels Profile Zones, 1,020 acres of Group Selection and 150 acres of Individual Tree Selection practices to protect rural communities and forest ecosystems from high-intensity wildfire and to promote healthy, all-age, multistoried fire resilient forests. It also incorporates Project Area access improvements via 0.6 miles of road construction, 25.3 miles of road reconstruction, and 21.0 miles of temporary road construction. Alternative C is designed to decommission 4.7 road miles to reduce risks of CWEs.

Alternative C also includes 16.5 miles of stream crossing infrastructure upgrades, 2 stream stabilizations, 1 hydraulic mine site restoration, and 7 acres of meadow enhancement to improve watershed, aquatic and riparian resources. Additionally, this Alternative functions to restore 20 acres of Aspen forest and 100 acres of California black oak.

In summary, Alternative C treats approximately 20 acres less of Group Selection and 5 acres less of ITS, compared to Alternative B. It also varies from Alternative B, in that the logging system methods for 15 acres of ITS and groups within the ITS matrix system, was modified from ground-based to helicopter (unit 585). Alternative C alters DFPZ treatment methods included under Alternative B, from 125 acres of hand-cut, tractor pile to hand-cut, hand pile (in portions unit 901A). Oak enhancement and aspen release treatments are identical to Alternative B (FEIS, Section 2.2.3 and 2.2.4.8, Appendices A and G).

## Alternative A – No-action

Alternative A, the No-action alternative for the Sugarberry Project, will not meet the intent of the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), as amended by the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment (SNFPA) Record of Decision (ROD) and the HFQLG ROD. The desired condition set forth in the HFQLG Act of an uneven-aged (all-aged), multistory, fire-resilient forest will not be achieved. Ecological health of the forest will not be improved and maintained.

I did not select Alternative A as this alternative will result in a higher probability of crown-fire events compared to Alternatives B, C or G. Wildfire could cause substantial losses of forest cover and degrade watersheds and wildlife habitat. No habitat improvement or restoration opportunities will be implemented under this Alternative. Alternative A will not contribute to community stability and will not generate any timber related forest products, jobs, or employee related income.

Trees in stands will continue to grow and canopy closure in these stands, especially in overstocked stands, will continue to increase. Brush and smaller trees will be shaded out and die, further increasing ladder fuels and fire hazards. Encroachment of conifers on black oak stands and meadows will gradually increase. Degraded streambanks will not be restored, and fish passage will continue to be impaired by undersized culverts.

This Alternative will leave the main transportation roads in the area in a less-than-satisfactory condition, inhibiting access for the public and fire management in some areas. Roads not closed or decommissioned will continue to contribute to accelerating erosion processes, altering water quality and aquatic habitat and increasing cumulative watershed effects.

Economically, there will be no jobs, direct or indirect, created and there will be no employee-related income generated by the use of this alternative. There will be no income created by saw log volume or biomass revenues. Alternative A will not meet the purpose and need for the Sugarberry Project.

## Alternative B

Although Alternative B will enhance fire protection, promote fire resilient forest conditions, and contribute to community stability by generating potentially 528 jobs, \$22,698,921.00 of employee related income and a net harvest value of \$368,464.00, I did not select this Alternative.

I find Alternative B will have the highest probability of increasing adverse cumulative watershed effects (CWEs). I find Alternative B will cause an additional subwatershed to be over the Threshold of Concern (TOC) and another subwatershed to approach TOC. The additional 25 acres of tree removal and applications of 140 acres more of ground-disturbing mechanical methods, not included under Alternatives C and G, will further degrade watershed resources.

Alternative B also incorporated 6.8 fewer miles of road decommissioning, compared to Alternative G, predicted to less effectively off-set short-term cumulative watershed effects risks linked to project implementation (FEIS, Sections 2.7 and 3.9). Aquatic and riparian habitat improvement activities are identical under Alternatives C and the selected Alternative G.

## Alternative C

Although Alternative C will enhance fire protection, promote fire resilient forest conditions, and contribute to community stability by generating potentially 519 jobs, \$22,271,251.00 of employee related income and a net harvest value of \$356,032.00, while lowering the probability for adverse cumulative watershed effects (CWEs) as compared to Alternative B, I did not select this Alternative.

I recognize Alternative C accomplishes identical fuels reduction, forest health and aquatic and riparian restoration treatments as Alternative G, but is less aggressive in lowering the potential risk for adverse CWEs due to 6.8 miles less road decommissioning. (FEIS, Section 2.2.3 and 2.7, Appendices C and G).

I find Alternative C creates 9 less potential jobs than Alternative B, and 1 more job than Alternative G. I also determined Alternative G generates \$16,770.00 more in employee related income compared to Alternative C, while providing greater watershed resource protection.

## Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

My decision complies with the laws, policies and executive orders listed below and described in the 2008 Sugarberry Project FEIS.

### Forest Plan Consistency

This decision to implement the Sugarberry Project is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long-term goals and objectives. The project was designed in conformance with Forest Plan standards and incorporates appropriate Forest Plan guidelines included in the Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1988), Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Final Environmental Impact Statement and ROD (1999) and Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement and ROD (2004) <sup>1</sup>.

### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that Federal agencies complete detailed statements on proposed actions that significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2004 SNFPA ROD, the Lassen and Plumas National Forests and the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest were directed to implement the HFQLG Pilot Project, consistent with the HFQLG Forest Recovery Act and Alternative 2 of the HFQLG FEIS (USDA Forest Service 2004, p. 66).

The Act's requirement to prepare an EIS is to provide decision makers with a detailed accounting of the likely environmental effects of a proposed action, prior to adoption and to inform the public and allow comments on such effects. The FEIS presents a comprehensive analysis of alternatives and environmental effects and meets the procedural requirements of NEPA (FEIS, Sections 1.6, 2.1 and 2.2).

## **National Forest Management Act (NFMA)**

Timber harvest for the Sugarberry Project has been designed to comply with this law. The findings related to the National Forest Management Act (16 USC 1604) are presented in Appendix I of the FEIS.

## **Clean Air Act**

The Clean Air Act makes it the primary responsibility of states and local governments to prevent air pollution and control air pollution at its source. States must have a plan that provides for implementation, maintenance and enforcement of the primary ambient air quality standard.

Whenever prescribed fire is used, smoke management and air quality will be emphasized. The Forest Service will comply with the Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires, announced by the EPA in 1998, the Memorandum of Understanding between the California Air Quality Board and the USDA Forest Service, signed on July 13, 1999, Title 17 of the 2004 California Air Pollution Control Laws and Interim Air Quality Policy and local smoke management programs. The procedures outlined in the FEIS will minimize air quality concerns (FEIS, Section 2.5.1; Appendix E).

## **Clean Water Act**

The Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, establishes goals, policies and procedures for the maintenance and improvement of the Nation's waters. The Clean Water Act established specific roles for federal, state and local authorities in the regulation, enforcement, planning, control and management of water pollution. Federal agencies are required by the Clean Water Act to cooperate with State agencies in preventing, reducing and eliminating pollution in concert with programs for managing water resources.

The Clean Water Act acknowledges land treatment measures as being an effective means of controlling non-point sources of water pollution and emphasizes their development. The Forest Service has developed and documented non-point pollution control measures applicable to National Forest System Lands and these measures have been certified as the most effective means for controlling non-point source pollution. These measures are called "Best Management Practices" (BMPs). All applicable BMPs will be implemented for the Sugarberry Project (FEIS, Section 2.5.1; Appendix E).

## Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA requires that Federal agencies consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate, to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of species listed as threatened or endangered under ESA, or destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat.

A combined Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (USDA Forest Service 2008) has been prepared to determine the effects of the proposed project on aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as endangered, threatened, or proposed for listing. Based on the analysis of the proposed project and treatments within the Sugarberry Project A, it is my determination the implementation of Alternative G will have no effect to any threatened, endangered, or proposed wildlife species (FEIS, Section 3.11).

## National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

Section 101 of the NHPA requires the Federal Government to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. To accomplish this, federal agencies utilize the Section 106 process associated with the National Historic Preservation Act. The National Historic Preservation Act sets forth a framework for identifying and evaluating historic properties, and assessing effects on these properties. This process has been codified in 36 CFR 800 Subpart B. The coordination or linkage between the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act and the mandate to preserve our national heritage under NEPA is well understood, and is formally established in 36 CFR 800.3b and 800.8.

NEPA includes reference to "...important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage." This terminology includes those resources defined as "historic properties" under the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.16(1)(1)). Therefore, agencies use the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 process to consider, manage and protect historic properties during the planning and implementation stages of federal projects. Locally, the Plumas National Forest uses a programmatic agreement between Region 5 of the USDA Forest Service, the California State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to implement the Section 106 process (FEIS, Sections 2.7 and 3.6).

## Executive Orders

Executive orders provide additional direction to federal agencies. I have determined that the Sugarberry Project meets the requirements of the following executive orders as described in the FEIS. The executive orders that apply to the Sugarberry Project are presented below.

**Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2000** - The following federally recognized tribal governments and tribal groups currently applying for federal recognition were consulted regarding the Sugarberry Project: Mooretown Rancheria, Enterprise Rancheria, Berry Creek Rancheria, Chico Band of the Mechoopda Indians, and the Konkow Valley Band of Maidu. No concerns were submitted during consultation (FEIS, Sections 1.9 and 4.1.3).

**Environmental Justice, Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994** - In February 1994, President Clinton signed an Executive Order on environmental justice, requiring federal agencies to conduct activities related to human health and the environment in a manner that does not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating against low-income or minority populations. Although low-income and minority populations live in the vicinity, activities proposed for the Sugarberry Project will not discriminate against these groups. Proposed activities will not have disproportionate adverse effects on human health, safety, or minorities, low income, or any other segments of the population. Scoping was conducted to elicit comments on the Proposed Action from all potentially interested and affected individuals and groups without regard to income or minority status (FEIS, Section 1.9).

**Indian Sacred Sites, Executive Order 13007 of May 24, 1996** - There are no known sacred sites within the Sugarberry Project Area (FEIS, Section 3.6).

**Invasive Species, Executive Order 13112 of February 3, 1999** - Mitigation measures, project design and standard management practices will lower risks for the introduction and spread of invasive species (FEIS, Sections 2.6, 2.7 and 3.4; Appendix E).

**Floodplain Management, Executive Order 11988 of May 24, 1977 and Protection of Wetlands, Executive Order 11990 of May 24, 1977** - These federal executive orders provide for protection and management of floodplains and wetlands. Compliance with these orders will be assured by incorporating the project Riparian Management Objectives, adhering to the Scientific Analysis Team guidelines as set forth in the HFQLG EIS and ROD and implementation of best management practices (BMPs), standard management practices and project design criteria (FEIS, Section 3.9).

**Migratory Birds, Executive Order 13186 of January 10, 2001** - In 2001, Executive Order 13186 was issued to outline responsibilities of federal agencies to protect migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (66 FR 3853-3856), including evaluating the effects of federal actions and agency plans on migratory birds through the NEPA process. Migratory birds have been addressed within the EIS and supporting MIS Report (FEIS, Section 3.11 and 2008 BA/BE). This order also directs federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to promote conservation of migratory bird populations.

**Recreational Fisheries, Executive Order 12962 of June 6, 1995** - The Sugarberry Project is designed to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity and distribution of aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing, as per Executive Order 12962 by: (1) incorporating SAT standards and guidelines through implementation of Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas on all ephemeral, intermittent, perennial and fish-bearing perennial streams within the Project Area, and (2) conserving and restoring aquatic systems to support recreational fisheries.

**Use of Off-Road Vehicles, Executive Order 11644 and 11989, amended May 25, 1977** - The Sugarberry Project is designed to comply with Executive Orders 11644 and 1980: A roads analysis was conducted by the IDT during project planning to determine disposition of system roads, resulting in road system treatments proposed as part of the Sugarberry Project (FEIS, Appendix D). Therefore, the Sugarberry Project complies with the Plumas National Forest's Off-Highway Vehicle Route Inventory and Designation process (FEIS, Sections 2.2.4.6 and 3.7).

## **Environmentally Preferable Alternative**

I consider Alternative G to be the environmentally preferable alternative because of the long-term benefits to resources described in the Reasons for the Decision section of this document. The reduced risk of losing forests to wildfire associated with Alternative G will best protect, preserve and enhance natural resources over the long-term. While action Alternatives B and C will have less short-term adverse effects to some resources, these alternatives cannot match the long-term benefits of Alternative G due to the additional 6.8 miles of road decommissioning. I have determined the long-term protection of National Forest System land watershed resources associated with Alternative G is the critical factor making it environmentally preferable.

## **Implementation**

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, the 5th business day from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may begin on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition. The expected implementation date is fall 2010.

## **Administrative Review or 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 RANDY MOORE, REGIONAL FORESTER at 1323 CLUB DRIVE, VALLEJO, CA 94592, FAX (707) 562-9229, [appeals-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us).

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to [appeals-pacificsouthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificsouthwest-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 Feather River Bulletin, Quincy, California, the newspaper of record. Attachments received after the 45 day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Feather River Bulletin, 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 who submitted comments or expressed interest 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.

## Contact Information

The 2008 Sugarberry Project FEIS and supporting documents are available at the Plumas National Forest, Feather River Ranger District. To view a copy of the 2008 FEIS or for further information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Sharen Parker at Feather River Ranger District, Plumas National Forest, 875 Mitchell Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965 or call (530) 534-6500.

*/s/ Alice B. Carlton*

*9/4/08*

ALICE B. CARLTON  
Forest Supervisor

Date