



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

[Month] [Year]



# Environmental Assessment

[Project Title]

[Your Ranger District, Your National Forest]  
[Your County, State]

[Legal Description if Applicable]

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## SUMMARY

The [X] National Forest proposes to [summarize proposal]. The project area is located [describe the project area] and is within the [X] Ranger District, [X] National Forest, [insert State]. This action is needed, because [summarize need].

The proposed action may [summarize effects of proposed action].

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the following alternatives:

- [Briefly describe each alternative]

Based upon the effects of the alternatives, the responsible official will decide [insert brief description of decision to be made].



# INTRODUCTION

## Document Structure

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The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

- *Introduction:* The section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency's proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded.
- *Comparison of Alternatives, including the Proposed Action:* This section provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on significant issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes possible mitigation measures. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.
- *Environmental Consequences:* This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by [insert topic (i.e., resource area, significant issues, environmental component)]. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by the effects of the No Action Alternative that provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison of the other alternatives that follow.
- *Agencies and Persons Consulted:* This section provides a list of preparers and agencies consulted during the development of the environmental assessment.
- *Appendices:* The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the [X] Ranger District Office in [X].

## Background

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[Provide the history of events leading up to the project proposal.]

## Purpose and Need for Action

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The purpose of this initiative is to [insert project objectives]. This action is needed, because [insert need for action in project location at this specific time]. This action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the [X] Forest Plan, and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described in that plan ([insert reference to Forest Plan]). [Describe specific linkages to the Forest Plan if appropriate. Reference any pre-NEPA or "plan-to-project" assessments that identified the need.]

## Proposed Action

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The action proposed by the Forest Service to meet the purpose and need is [insert brief description of the proposed action].

## Decision Framework

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Given the purpose and need, the deciding official reviews the proposed action and the other alternatives in order to make the following decisions:

[insert questions that the deciding official must answer when making the final decision].

## Public Involvement

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The proposal was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on [insert dates]. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping [insert dates]. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency [insert description of public involvement efforts and reference to documents in record detailing results].

Using the comments from the public, other agencies, and [insert others such as tribes, depending on the situation] (see *Issues* section), the interdisciplinary team developed a list of issues to address.

## Issues

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The Forest Service separated the issues into two groups: significant and non-significant issues. Significant issues were defined as those directly or indirectly caused by implementing the proposed action. Non-significant issues were identified as those: 1) outside the scope of the proposed action; 2) already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision; 3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or 4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations require this delineation in Sec. 1501.7, "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..." A list of non-significant issues and reasons regarding their categorization as non-significant may be found at [X] in the project record.

As for significant issues, the Forest Service identified [X] topics raised during scoping. These issues include:

[Insert Issue #1]: [Describe issue and identify any indicators that can be used to measure whether that issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures]

[Insert Issue #...]: [Describe issue and identify any indicators that can be used to measure whether that issue can be remedied by implementing different alternatives or mitigation measures]

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# ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the [X] project. It includes a description and map of each alternative considered. This section also presents the alternatives in comparative form, sharply defining the differences between each alternative and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public. Some of the information used to compare the alternatives is based upon the design of the alternative (i.e., helicopter logging versus the use of skid trails) and some of the information is based upon the environmental, social and economic effects of implementing each alternative (i.e., the amount of erosion or cost of helicopter logging versus skidding).

## Alternatives

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### Alternative 1

#### *No Action*

Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. No [insert project activities] would be implemented to accomplish project goals.

[Insert Map for Alternative]



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Figure 1. [Insert Map Title]

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## Alternative 2

### *The Proposed Action*

[Insert Proposed Action—should be the same action proposed in the SOPA]

[Insert Map for Alternative]



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Figure 2. [Insert Map Title].

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## Alternative 3

[Insert Alternative description]

[Insert Map for Alternative]



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Figure 3. [Insert Map Title].

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## Alternative ....

[Insert Alternative description]

[Insert Map for Alternative]



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Figure [X]. [Insert Map Title].

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## **Mitigation Common to All Alternatives** \_\_\_\_\_

In response to public comments on the proposal, mitigation measures were developed to ease some of the potential [X] impacts the various alternatives may cause. The mitigation measures may be applied to any of the action alternatives.

[Describe mitigation measures]

## Comparison of Alternatives

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This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

Table [X]. [Title of Chart].

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	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
[Item to Compare 1]				
[Item to Compare 2]				
[Item to Compare 3]				
[Item to Compare 4]				
[Item to Compare 5]				
[Item to Compare 6]				

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## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section summarizes the physical, biological, social and economic environments of the affected project area and the potential changes to those environments due to implementation of the alternatives. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives presented in the chart above.

### [Topic #1]

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[Insert overview of the affected environment, description of effects to that environment and any table or figures necessary to help describe the effects. Use indicators developed for each issue in the *Issues* section to describe effects by alternative.]

### [Topic #2]

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[Insert overview of the affected environment, description of effects to that environment and any table or figures necessary to help describe the effects. Use indicators developed for each issue in the *Issues* section to compare effects by alternative.]

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes and non-Forest Service persons during the development of this environmental assessment:

***ID TEAM MEMBERS:***

*[Insert names]*

***FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES:***

*[Insert names]*

***TRIBES:***

*[Insert names]*

***OTHERS:***

*[Insert names]*