



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests  
Forest Supervisor's Office  
903 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Kamiah, ID 83536  
208-935-2513 (office)

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File Code: 1950  
Date: July 31, 2015

Dear Planning Participant:

We will be considering the enclosed project proposals and conducting environmental analyses on them in the near future.

You are being notified of these proposals because you have expressed interest in projects on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Preliminary assessments have been made that the following projects fall within a category of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6, thereby excluding them from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). On our Forest, we refer to these as "Small NEPA" projects. Please feel free to offer your comments regarding them (see next page).

Thank you for your continued participation in projects involving the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

*for*   
CHERYL F. PROBERT  
Forest Supervisor  
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests

Enclosures: Project Descriptions and Maps

## ***Information Regarding Public Comments***

Please review the following proposals and submit your site-specific comments, as described below, for inclusion in our analyses for the projects.

Comments should be submitted as an email attachment, in Word (preferred) or PDF format, to: [comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us).

If you choose to comment on the proposals, please include the following:

- (1) Your name, address, phone number, email address, and organization, if any;
- (2) Title of project; and,
- (3) Specific facts and relevant rationale you feel should be considered.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request this Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the Agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the options available (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

**Please note that this opportunity for comment is primarily for you to make statements regarding why the project should or should not proceed as described below. If you have questions about any details regarding an individual project, we encourage you to please contact the project proponent, listed with each project on the pages below, to possibly get answers (including requests for more detailed project maps) before submitting your comments.**

If you have any questions regarding comment submission, please contact George Harbaugh, 208-935-4260 (work), 208-935-4275 (FAX); or, mail inquiries: Supervisor's Office, Nez Perce–Clearwater NFs, 903 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Kamiah, ID, 83536.

**Please submit your comments by August 31, 2015, for full consideration.**

## **1) Lochsa-Selway PIT Tag Array Special Use Permit (Moose Creek RD)**

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3): *Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.*

**Legal Coordinates** (Boise Meridian): Site 1: T32N, R7E, S4 SWNW; Site 2: T33N, R7E, S33 NENW; Site 3: T32N, R7E, S15 NENW; and, Site 4: T32N, R7E, S25 SENE

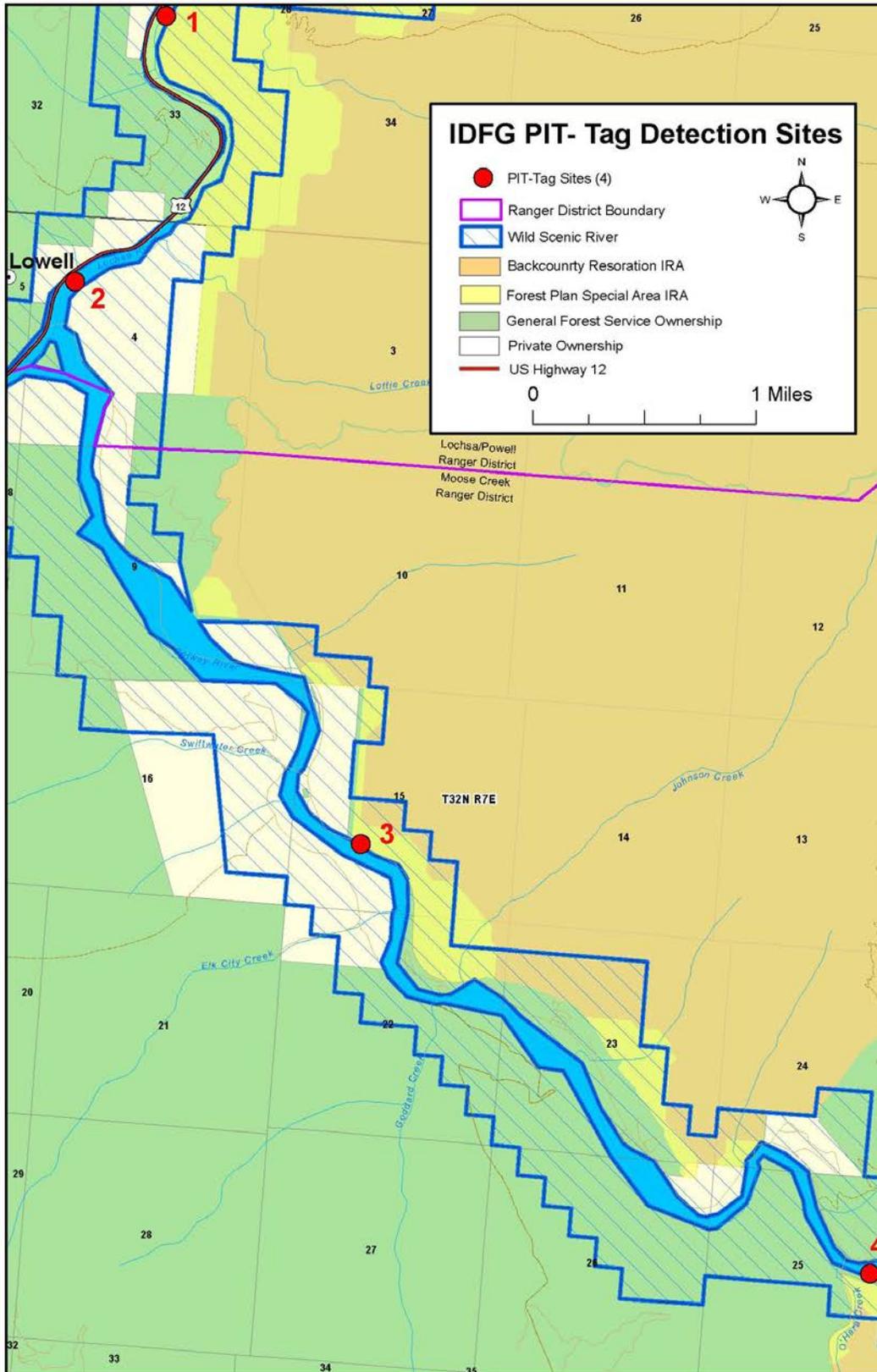
**Background:** The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the Nez Perce Tribe propose to install four instream Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag detection sites within the lower Lochsa and Selway Rivers. These sites are needed for fish managers to better estimate abundance and measure migration timing of adult salmon and steelhead. Two other possible examination systems were initially considered to collect this data: adult weirs and Genetic Stock Identification (GSI), which uses systematic genetic sampling. Weirs were rejected because they: 1) require adult fish to be captured and physically handled, resulting in more stress to the fish; 2) are not logistically feasible on large river systems; 3) result in significant safety considerations for both crews operating the equipment and members of the public utilizing the river; and, 4) require nearly full-time staffing and an increased level of site disturbance. GSI was tested, but rejected, because: 1) the Lochsa and Selway Rivers' steelhead lack the genetic differentiation to assign fish to one population or the other, resulting in a single population estimate for the entire upper Clearwater River; 2) proper management of the Lochsa and Selway Rivers requires separate estimates for each drainage, currently unattainable using GSI technology; and, 3) it only estimates population abundance coming over Lower Granite Dam and does not account for mortality prior to the fish entering the Lochsa and Selway River drainages. It was decided to use PIT tag detection sites because they offer the lowest risk to listed species, the lowest long-term operational cost, the lowest physical and visual impact to the site, and are easily removable, if needed.

**Project Design / Equipment:** Each site may contain a maximum of 20 antennas (3'W x 20'L x 4"H), plus onshore electronics, which are housed in a 12" x 18" enclosure. Each electronics enclosure would be connected to the site antennas using a 12 gauge ½" SOOW electrical cable. Antennas would be walked by hand to the stream edge and prepped for installation in a 20' x 30' area. Installation typically involves hand tools for the minimal excavation required, and earth anchors are used to fasten antennas to the bottom of the river and driven in with a pneumatic hand-held driver. No material is removed from the stream during the excavation activities. Once installed, antennas are flush with the surrounding substrate. Because the project is in a Wild and Scenic corridor, the Forest Recreation specialist has analyzed the project design features and determined they are appropriate for this type of project. Because the project is also in the designated "Rackliff-Gedney" Idaho Roadless area ("Forest Plan Special Area"), consultation will occur at the Regional level regarding the appropriateness of the project.

**Project Implementation:** IDFG, in coordination with the Tribe, will plan to install these sites as funds are available, with the first site possibly being installed in summer / fall of 2016. Each site will take approximately three days of instream work to install. Sites would be operated year-round and would be operated for the maximum duration of five years, at the end of which, the permittees could reapply for additional time, if needed.

**Project Information:** Molly Puchlerz, Lands Special Uses, 208-942-0303, [mpuchlerz@fs.fed.us](mailto:mpuchlerz@fs.fed.us).

### Map of the Lochsa-Selway PIT Tag Array SUP



## **2) Elk Morris Road Decommissioning (Palouse RD)**

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(20): *Activities that restore, rehabilitate, or stabilize lands occupied by roads and trails, excluding National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails to a more natural condition that may include removing, replacing, or modifying drainage structures and ditches, reestablishing vegetation, reshaping natural contours and slopes, reestablishing drainage-ways, or other activities that would restore site productivity and reduce environmental impacts.*

**Legal Coordinates of Project Site:** T40 N; R2 E; S3, 4, 5, 9, 10

**Background:** Approximately 12 miles of non-system roads and trails have been surveyed and identified as having a high risk of failure, erosion, poor stream crossings, and impaired soil productivity in the Upper Elk Creek sub-watershed. The roads also have compacted and displaced topsoil and have increased road densities above desired conditions for water quality, fisheries, and wildlife habitat. Because these are non-system roads, there are no designated road numbers. The project would also improve currently fragmented wildlife habitat, by reducing the number of roads.

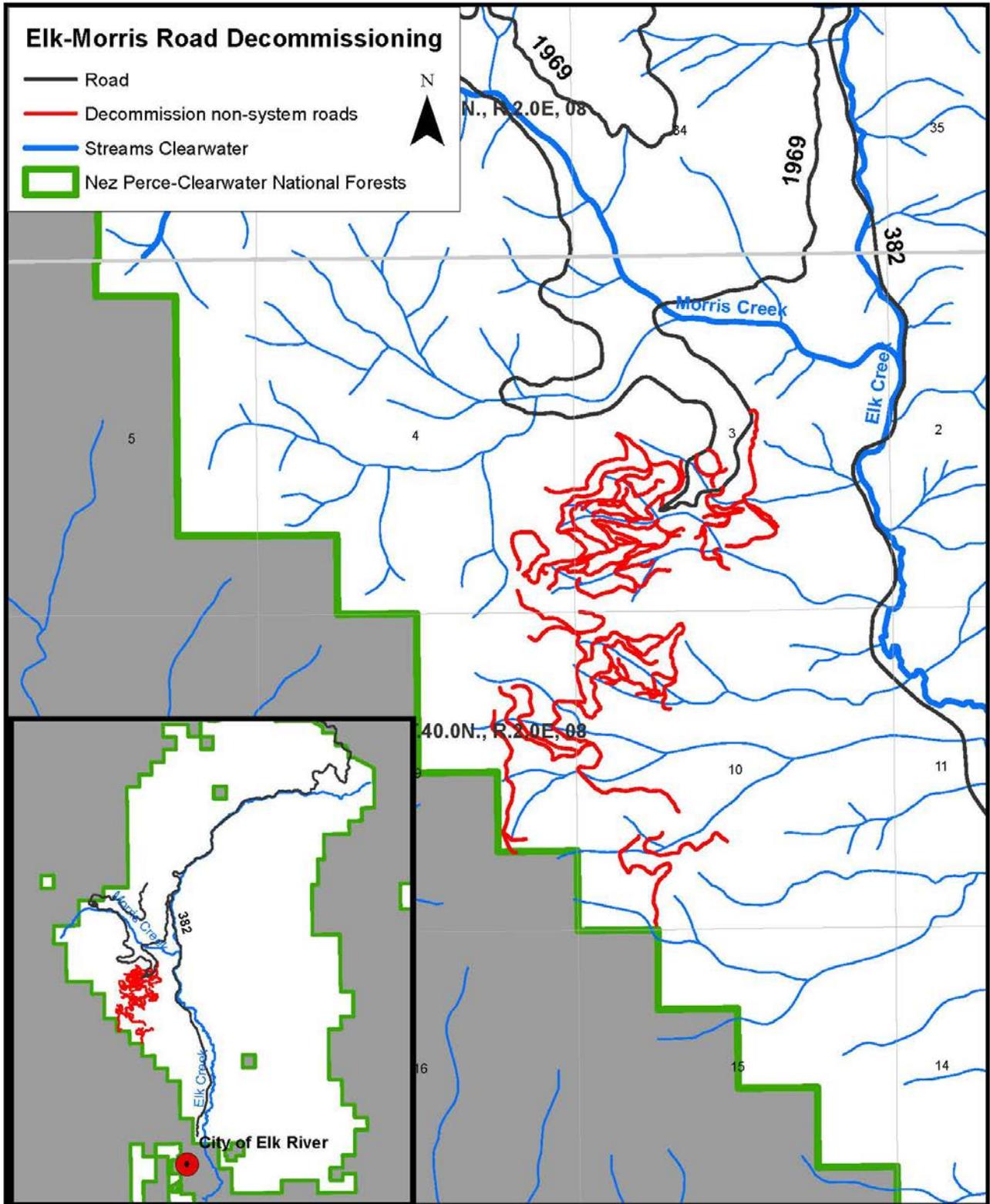
**Project Design / Equipment:** The project will be coordinated with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute and is located approximately four miles north of the City of Elk River in Clearwater County, Idaho. Ground disturbance would involve the use of medium sized excavating equipment to rip, re-contour, and obliterate non-system roads. Detrimental soil disturbance beyond the road prism due to decommissioning is not anticipated. The project will eliminate access and road use on any of the currently used non-system roads that will be obliterated by excavators.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be utilized, though not limited to, are: controlling concentration and flow of surface and subsurface water; reestablishing vegetation on exposed soils by seeding suitable grass and legume species in conjunction with mulching and fertilization or planting tree seedlings or sprigs; protecting the soil surface from detachment by using mulches, biodegradable erosion mats, and temporary water bars; inhibiting the downslope movement of sediments to streams by using slash filter windrows on or below the fill slopes, baled straw in ditches or below fill slopes, and sediment catch basins; controlling weeds by cleaning equipment before entering National Forest System lands, removing mud, dirt, and plant parts from project equipment before moving it into the project area, beginning the project operations in uninfested areas, locating and using weed-free staging areas, avoiding or minimizing all types of travel through weed-infested areas, restrict to those periods when spread of seed or propagules are least likely, identifying sites where equipment can be cleaned, and coordinating project activities with any nearby herbicide application to maximize cost effectiveness of weed treatments.

**Project Implementation:** The project will start in 2016 and will last through 2018, depending on available funding.

**Project Information:** Eric Crook, Hydro-Soils Specialist, 208-875-1727, [ecrook@fs.fed.us](mailto:ecrook@fs.fed.us).

### Map of the Elk Morris Road Decommissioning Project



### **3) Lower East Fork Potlatch River Large Woody Debris Project (Palouse RD)**

#### **Proposed Categories:**

36 CFR 220.6(e)(7): *Modification or maintenance of stream or lake aquatic habitat improvement structures using native materials or normal practices.*

36 CFR 220.6(e)(12): *Harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.*

36 CFR 220.6(e)(19): *Removing and/or relocating debris and sediment following disturbance events (such as floods, hurricanes, tornados, mechanical/ engineering failures, etc.) to restore uplands, wetlands, or riparian systems to pre-disturbance conditions, to the extent practicable, such that site conditions will not impede or negatively alter natural processes.*

**Legal Coordinates of Project Site:** T40N, R1W, S23 and 24

**Background:** The project would be a cooperative effort between the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) and the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (Forests) to rehabilitate in-stream habitat in the East Fork Potlatch River (East Fork), which was adversely modified by a road built in the 1940s to haul logs to Bovill. Nearly all river complexity and in-stream habitat structure were removed. IDFG research has shown that the most significant limiting factor for steelhead in the East Fork is the lack of in-stream habitat complexity and over-winter habitat for juveniles, due to low densities of large woody debris (LWD). LWD is critical in developing pools, collecting spawning gravels, and providing habitat diversity and cover for steelhead and other salmonids. This project would increase habitat complexity along an approximately 1200-foot section of the lower East Fork by adding LWD structures, and contribute to the IDFG goal of enhancing 25% of the core distribution of steelhead in the East Fork.

**Project Design / Equipment:** The project would construct approximately 12 structures, Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS), within the wetted channel of the East Fork, approximately a half mile upstream from its mouth, with the downstream end of the project at approximately 46°47'51.09"N, 116°25'0.89"W. PALS are a restoration method where pieces of large woody debris and smaller woody debris are hand-placed into the stream channel and anchored by wooden fence posts driven in the streambed. The structures would extend from 40-80% of the bankfull channel width at a downstream angle and would be located 65-70 feet apart (with some greater distances between clusters of structures), depending on existing habitat and geomorphic conditions. Each PALS structure would include two or three 6-10' sections of 4-20" diameter green tree trunk, which would be held in place with five to ten 5-6' tapered and pointed fence posts, each 3-5" in diameter. The tree trunks would be harvested from native conifers from the uplands adjacent to the East Fork channel, while the fence posts would be untreated lodgepole pine brought in from off-site. The fence posts would be driven into the stream bottom with a hydraulic post-driver.

Materials and equipment would be hand-carried from a staging area (either on the north or south side of the river) or winched into the stream channel, and would be either hand-carried or transported via ATV trailer (on the existing historic road/berm on the south side of the river or via a user-created trail on the north side of the river) to each PALS site. This method eliminates the need for heavy machinery and

minimizes the impact on stream banks and riparian areas. In addition to the post-driver, chainsaw, small winches, and ATV/trailer, and the fuel and lubricants associated with this equipment, non-powered tools such as pick bars, shovels, and come-alongs would also be used to construct the LWD structures.

Access to the north staging area would be via National Forest Service (NSF) Road #3227, which is closed to public use, but drivable with a 4WD vehicle. Alternately, a south staging area could be accessed from the area where the IDFG has operated a steelhead trap and weir (under a special use permit from the Forests) near the downstream end of the proposed project site. The IDFG accesses this site, with permission from private land owners, via a primitive road. This private road continues for a few dozen feet on NFS land and ends in a parking area adjacent to the Bonneville Power Association power line corridor. The IDFG is seeking further permission for the use of the private road specifically for this project, but the north staging area (entirely on the NFS land) is the primary access location.

While approximately 20-30 individual trees would be felled, the trees would constitute a tiny proportion of the forest vegetation in proximity to the project area. Many or all of these trees would be harvested from the default RHCA of the East Fork, but these trees would, by project design, enhance LWD recruitment to the East Fork, and would otherwise be individually selected (in consultation with appropriate Forests specialists) to eliminate potential adverse effects on Riparian Management Objectives, as well as any special status plant or animal species or their habitat. The existing habitat improvement programmatic consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service would be employed for Section 7 compliance, and appropriate permitting for in-water activities sought from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

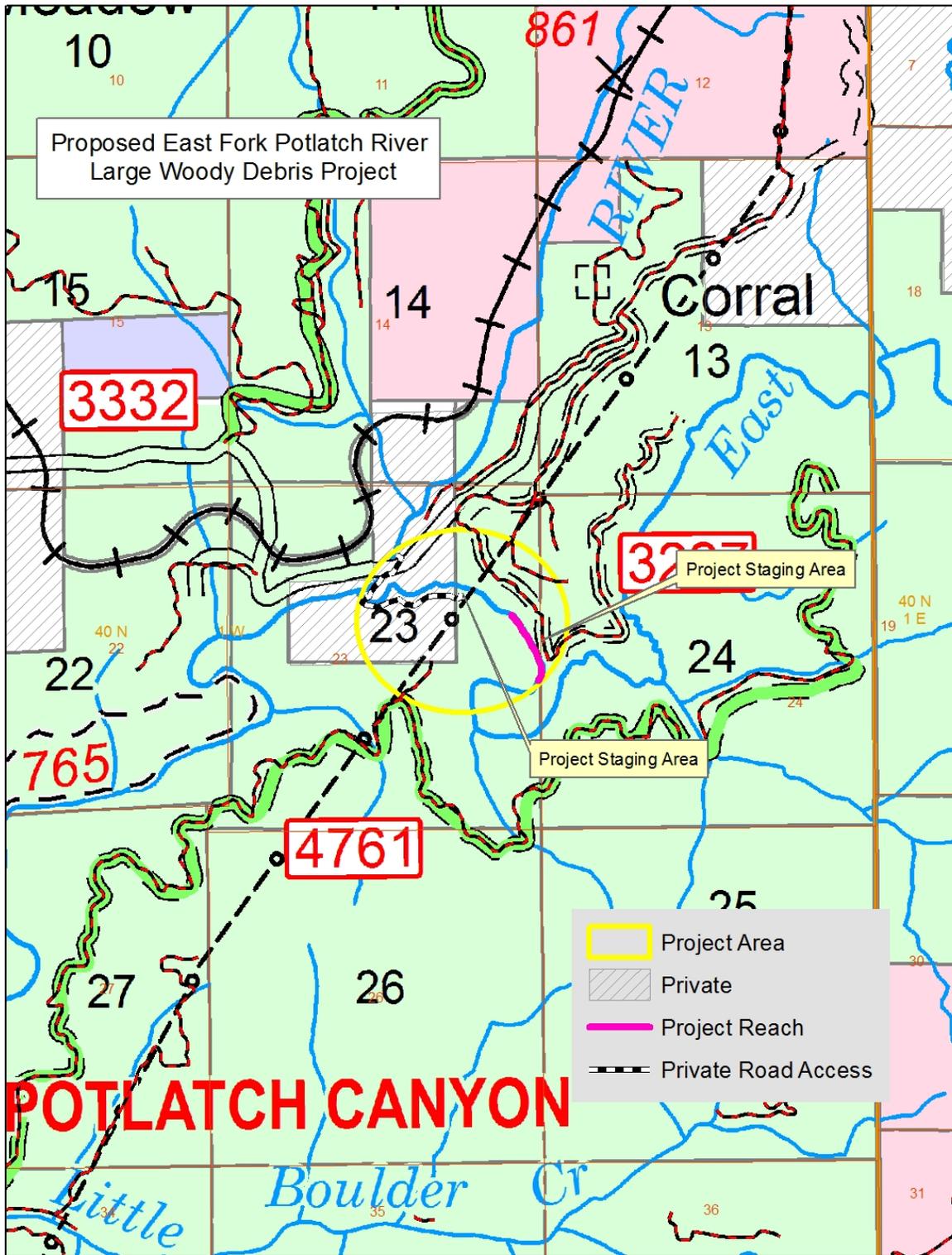
Ground-disturbing activities would be confined to skidding of felled LWD pieces and driving of fence posts into the streambed, while the use of an ATV and trailer on the user-created route (from the north staging area) or former roadbed (from the south staging area) would be facilitated by the existing disturbed/cleared conditions. It may be necessary to remove some deadfall from either route to allow the use of the ATV/trail, but this would be replaced / augmented to discourage further use of the route by motorized vehicles. Work would be conducted during low flow conditions and would follow any terms and conditions associated with the Endangered Species Act programmatic consultation. Any required permits for disturbance of water or wetlands would be obtained prior to initiating work (Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, Idaho Department of Water Resources Stream Alteration Permit).

BMPs for fuel storage and machine fueling would be followed to minimize the risk of a fuels spill into live water. In particular, the hydraulic post-driver would not be refueled while in the stream channel, and would be clean and free of hydraulic fluid and oil leaks. Appropriate spill containment supplies would be onsite in the event of a fuel, hydraulic fluid, or lubricant spill. We will ensure all equipment is free of noxious weed seed prior to entering site. Out of channel soil disturbance should be minimal, but if advised by the District range specialist, we would reseed any areas deemed disturbed with a native seed mix and spot spray or pull weeds.

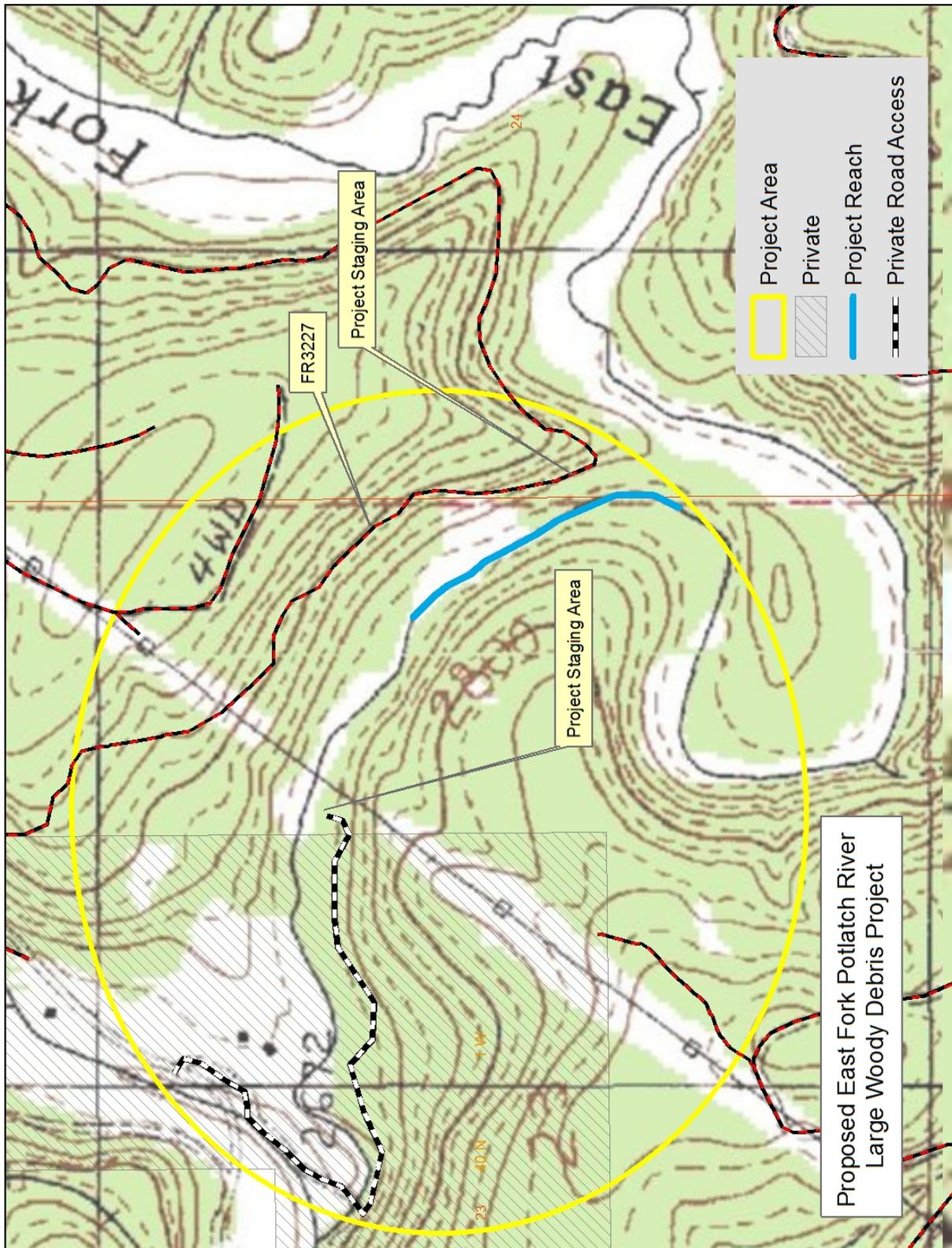
**Project Implementation:** The project would be implemented by IDFG and Forest staff in two to three weeks during the late summer and fall low-flow instream work window, preferably in October 2015, but if preparations and permissions are not complete for this fall, the project would be completed in 2016.

**Project Information:** Dan Kenney, North Zone Fisheries Biologist, 208-476-8319, [dkenney@fs.fed.us](mailto:dkenney@fs.fed.us).

**Map #1 of the Lower East Fork Potlatch River Large Woody Debris Project**



### Map #2 of the Lower East Fork Potlatch River Large Woody Debris Project



#### **4) ELM Placer Exploration (Red River RD)**

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8): *Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.*

**Legal Coordinates of Project Site:** T26N, R8E, S13, 14, 23, 24

**Background:** The project is located in the Little Mallard Creek drainage and lies in a historic mining area containing upland vegetation and timber of mixed species, and some road templates still exist from these activities. Gene M., Brad M., and Roger T. (“ELM”) propose to explore possible gold values on unpatented minerals claims, and the need of the project is to determine if sufficient quantities of valuable minerals exist to warrant further exploration or development. They have already performed prospecting activities and are narrowing the search for finding valuable mineral resources that can be mined, removed, and marketed at a profit.

**Project Design / Equipment:** Seven test pits or trenches would be excavated, removing the topsoil and overburden, and stockpiling them separately for later reclamation. Material to be tested and processed will also be excavated and stockpiled. A trommel (processing plant) will be placed on site, and processed material will be returned to the test pit. When testing is complete at each site, overburden will be returned to the pit, topsoil will be placed on top and recontoured to a natural profile, and the disturbed area will be revegetated / seeded. Each test pit / excavation will be sized 10’ X 10’ to bedrock at a minimum. If needed, bench excavation would be utilized to reach bedrock, which may increase the size of the pit to approximately 10’ X 25’-30’, and before excavation begins, sediment retention barriers (straw bales, silt fence or other appropriate structures) will be placed between each test location and live water. Equipment used for this project will include, but not be limited to one 200-sized excavator, two ½ ton pickup trucks, one ¾ ton pickup truck, and two 14” Pro Gold trommels. A 404 permit will be obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers before any excavation begins.

Source water for processing test material will come from ground water encountered when excavating each test pit. All water will be recycled from each test hole, which will function as a settling pond. If ground water is insufficient for continued operation, water will be withdrawn from an unnamed tributary. A water use permit will be obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources before water will be drafted from any stream.

No temporary roads would be needed, and trails through the project area would be de-compacted and revegetated, as needed, after the project activities are completed. All activities will follow both State of Idaho mining BMPs and standard mitigation measures for mineral projects developed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (and incorporated into the operator’s permit), including, but not limited to: notifying the District Ranger or minerals administrator 48 hours before any work is to begin; not beginning operations until a field review is conducted by appropriate Forest Service personnel to verify placement of sample pits and temporary access trails and ensure that acceptable conditions exist (no excessive saturation, high water, etc.); utilizing suitable erosion control devices, placed between the pond and live waters; washing all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto NFS lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds; avoiding disturbances of wetlands and stream riparian zones; avoiding working on saturated soils; not discharging water into any live stream or wetland; not removing large vegetation without prior authorization of the District Ranger; developing a hazardous material and

Small NEPA Scoping Letter – July 31, 2015  
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

spill prevention plan and submitting it to the District Ranger prior to operations; not storing more than 30 gallons of fuel or oil in the project area; removing all equipment, garbage and trash resulting from the operation from NFS lands, prior to October 1; and, using and maintaining a sanitary facility at the project area while operations are ongoing.

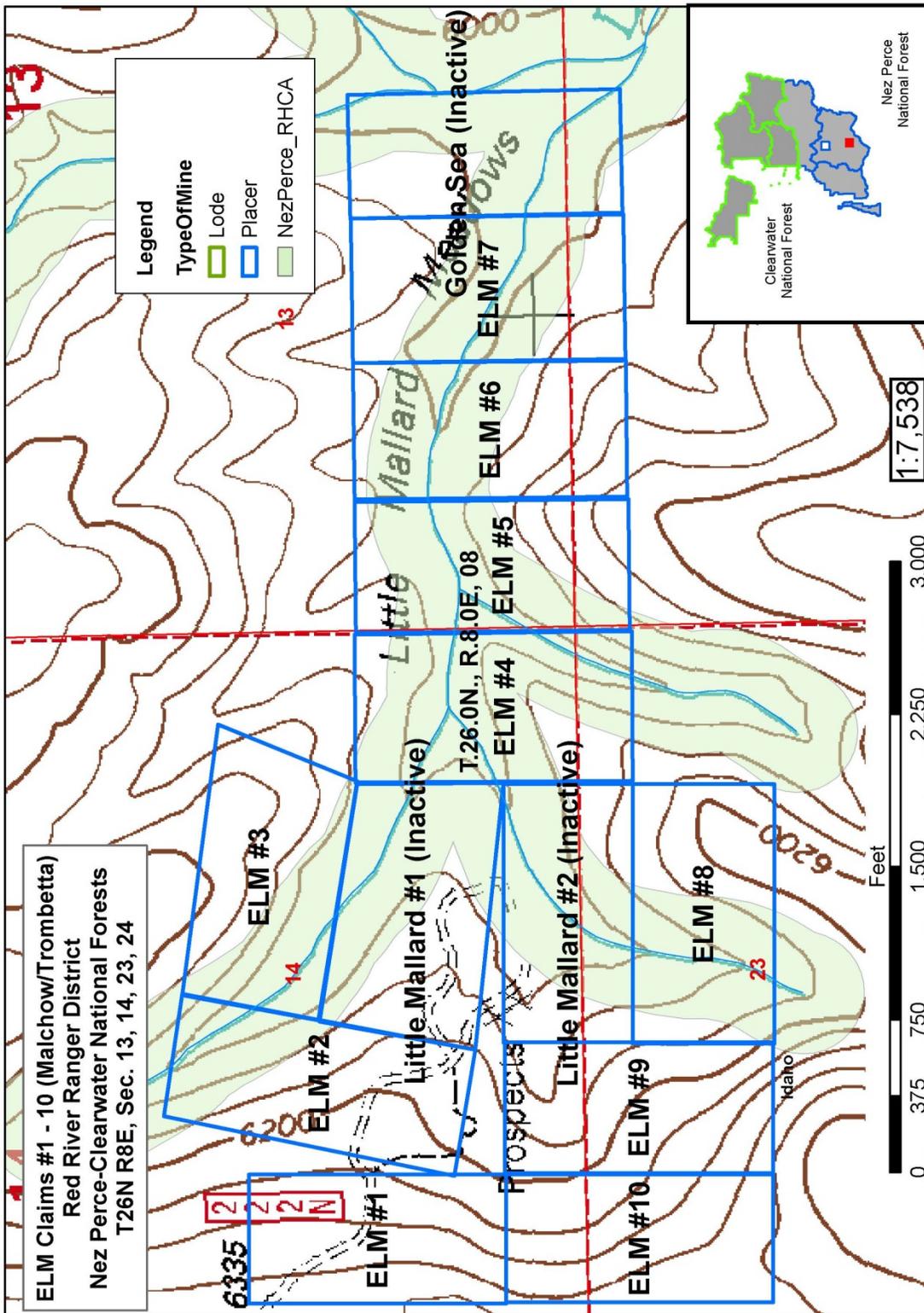
Because the project is located in the designated “Gospel Hump” roadless area (“Forest Plan Special Area”), consultation will occur at the Regional level regarding the appropriateness of the project. There will also be consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) regarding the project, since it will be located in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs).

**Project Implementation:** The project will start as soon as possible, and is expected to last less than one year.

**Project Information:** Marty Jones, Minerals Administrator, 208-983-5158, [martinjones@fs.fed.us](mailto:martinjones@fs.fed.us).



**Map #2 for the ELM Placer Exploration Project (RHCA areas)**



June 4, 2015, Clint Hughes

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### **5) Leggett and Moose Creek Culvert Replacements Project (Red River RD)**

**Proposed Category:** 36 CFR 220.6(e)(18): *Installing a newly-designed structure that replaces an existing culvert to improve aquatic organism passage and prevent resource and property damage where the road or trail maintenance level does not change.*

**Legal Coordinates of Project Site:** Leggett Creek: T 29N, R7E, S29; Moose Creek: T29N, R7E, S22

**Background:** The current culverts at the Leggett and Moose Creek crossings with Highway 14 are undersized and constitute aquatic organism barriers. They have also caused some minor erosion downstream. The needs for the proposed action are to provide the appropriate size culverts for the 100-year storm, to create proper channel improvements to prevent erosion, and to allow adequate passage for aquatic organisms, including endangered and/or threatened fish species, at the sites. Replacing both these structures would connect approximately nine miles of upstream habitat.

**Project Design / Equipment:** This project would remove the existing 9' by 102' corrugated steel culvert on Leggett Creek and replace it with a 20' wide by 10' high by 102' long open bottom arch with concrete footing. Removed also would be the 4' by 94' corrugated metal pipe on Moose Creek and replaced with a 14' wide by 7'3" high by 102' long structural-plate open bottom arch culvert on a concrete footing. The work would include, but is not limited to, clearing and grubbing, erosion control measures, structure excavation, roadway embankment, removing and disposing existing culverts, compaction, riprap, roadway surfacing, furnishing and installing precast concrete foundations, furnishing and erecting structural-plate arch culverts, and all other incidental items necessary to complete the project in accordance with the plans and specifications. The project will meet current Forest Plan standards for passage of 100 year flow events and allow for aquatic organism passage. Equipment to be used includes an excavator, grader, dump trucks and compaction roller. Construction at each site will be phased construction, leaving one lane of Highway 14 open for the duration of the construction.

The Nez Perce Tribe (funding the project) and Idaho Department of Transportation will be contacted for coordination. A separate notification will be given to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Lands, as required under Section 10 of the Rivers & Harbor Act 1899, Section 404 and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and EPA Construction General Permit 42104-61. Water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) and conservation measures through the 2012 Stream Crossing Programmatic would be implemented (Reference NMFS 2011/05875 and FWS 01EIFW00-2012-F-0015).

**Project Implementation:** The Leggett Creek replacement would begin in 2016 and should last two to three weeks during the instream work window. Moose Creek would be replaced in 2017 during the instream work window.

**Project Information:** Chris Wolffing, South Zone Engineer, 208-983-5153, [cwolffing@fs.fed.us](mailto:cwolffing@fs.fed.us) and Allison Johnson, Fish Biologist, 208-983-4094, [ajohnson04@fs.fed.us](mailto:ajohnson04@fs.fed.us)

### Map of the Leggett and Moose Creek Culvert Replacements Project

