DECISION NOTICE
&
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

MIDDLE FORK SALVAGE PROJECT

USDA Forest Service
Boise National Forest
Emmett Ranger District
Valley and Boise County, Idaho

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Middle Fork Salvage Project has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA implementing regulations of 2008, including 36 CFR 219.2(c) and the transition provisions at 36 CFR 219.14), and the 2003 Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

The EA documents the analysis of a "No Action Alternative" and two action alternatives designed to meet the purpose and need for the project. Appendix D of the EA provides responses to comments received on the Proposed Action Report.

PURPOSE AND NEED

On July 17, 2007 a summer thunderstorm ignited several wildfires in the Middle Fork Payette River watershed on the Emmett Ranger District (RD) of the Boise National Forest (NF). The five largest of these fires became the Middle Fork Complex and were aggressively attacked and ultimately extinguished by October 31, 2007.

The 6,994-acre Lightning Fire and 1,582-acre Lucky Fire were the two largest fires of the complex. The Lightning Fire burned about seven miles northeast of Crouch, Idaho in both Granite Creek, a tributary of Anderson Creek, and in Lightning Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork Payette River. The Lucky Fire occurred adjacent to the Middle Fork Payette River between West Fork Creek and Sixmile Creek approximately 12 miles north of Crouch. For some resources, the Middle Fork Salvage Project described within the EA (EA, Section 1.4) consists of distinct analyses for both the Lucky and the Lightning fire areas, while for other resources, the two areas were addressed as one analysis area.

Immediately after the fire was contained, several assessments of the burn area were initiated. To assess watershed conditions, a Burn Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) assessment, which included an assessment of fire effects to soils, watershed, and public safety, was prepared. This assessment was followed by a Roads Analysis of the Lightning fire area. Finally, a tree mortality assessment was initiated. These assessments provided information used to formulate the four purpose and needs identified below:

Purpose 1: Provide commercial timber supporting local and regional sawmills, employment, and economies by salvaging fire-killed and dying trees from lands assigned to Forest Plan Management Prescription Category (MPC) 5.2 ("Commodity Production Emphasis within Forested Landscapes") within the 2007 Lucky and Lightning fire areas.

Assessments showed that both fires burned across a broad range of severities. Initial estimates of basal area mortality using LANDSAT imagery found approximately 20% of both fires experienced no mortality, although about 45% of the Lightning Fire area suffered from 25% to 100% basal area death and the Lucky Fire received the same range of mortality across about 37% of its total area. A second evaluation using post-fire aerial photography estimated that moderate to high fire mortality was noted on about 9% of the lands within the Lightning Fire area assigned to MPC 5.2, which emphasizes achievement of

sustainable resource conditions that support commodity outputs, and on 48% of the lands assigned to MPC 5.2 within the Lucky Fire area (*EA, Section 1.3*).

Forest Plan MPC 5.2 directs achieving sustainable resource conditions supporting commodity outputs emphasizing timber production in forested settings. In MPC 5.2 management actions shall maintain and restore forest ecosystem health to reduce long-term impacts from uncharacteristic disturbance as well as provide commodity outputs (*Forest Plan, p. III-89).* Fire-killed and imminently dead timber is a very perishable commodity. Within a year of mortality blue-stain fungus will have begun to discolor and devalue pine species, and smaller diameter trees of all species will have started to weather check and lose value. To recover commercial value supporting regional and local economies dead timber must be harvested promptly. To facilitate capturing the value of these trees before they deteriorate, the Forest Supervisor has received an Emergency Situation Determination for this project. Implementation of this project could occur during the administrative appeal period (36 CFR 215.10).

Purpose 2: Reduce the number of hazard trees that threaten safety and access along the Sixmile road (National Forest System [NFS] road 670) within the Middle Fork Payette Wild and Scenic River eligible corridor while maintaining the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) and free-flowing character of the Middle Fork Payette River, and preserving its Wild and Scenic eligibility and recreational classification.

About 1.1 miles of the eastern end of the Sixmile road (NFS road 670) is also the eastern boundary of the Lucky Fire. Fire-killed, imminently dead, and weakened trees along this road segment are likely to unexpectedly fall or roll into or across the road with the potential to injure or kill road users, damage property, and obstruct traffic. Although this road segment is within the river corridor where Wild and Scenic River eligibility must be protected, salvage harvest that preserves the river's ORVs is allowed by the Forest Plan, and the known risk posed by hazard trees to public safety must be addressed and reduced.

Purpose 3: Reforest with native conifers severely burned areas expected to regenerate slowly to restore MPC 5.2 lands to sustainable commodity producing condition and to restore a forested appearance to MPC 4.1c lands (portions of Peace Rock IRA) and to the Middle Fork Payette River corridor.

Approximately 54 acres within the eligible Middle Fork Payette River corridor and 132 acres within Peace Rock IRA (MPC 4.1c, Undeveloped Recreation) were severely deforested by the fires. These areas experienced high burn intensity and are predicted to naturally regenerate trees slowly. Timely tree planting will accelerate the development of a forested appearance and preserve the outstandingly remarkable values of the river corridor. In addition, about 598 acres of burned lands assigned to MPC 5.2 need to be planted to help restore desired conditions specified by the Forest Plan (e.g., sustainable resource conditions that support commodity outputs).

Purpose 4: Reduce adverse effects of the Anderson Creek road system (NFS road 668) to area watersheds.

Decommissioning a total of 9.2 miles of authorized and unauthorized road, closing yearlong another 7.2 miles of authorized road to motorized use, converting 1.2 miles to non-motorized trail, and blocking motorized access to 0.2 miles of unauthorized road will reduce road-related watershed impacts from the Anderson Creek road system. The Forest Plan contains the objective of "reducing road-related effects on soil productivity, water quality, and aquatic/riparian species and their habitats" *(Forest Plan, p. III-21).* Management Area-specific direction includes the objective to "initiate restoration of watershed conditions and fish habitat in the Anderson Creek subwatershed to help strengthen the local bull trout population" *(Forest Plan, p. III-262).*

The proposed action (Alternative B) and Alternative C advance many Forest-wide goals and objectives for several major resource areas and benefit categories managed by the Forest Plan. Specific timberland and vegetation management goals and objectives furthered or accomplished by the proposed reforestation activities include:

Goal VEGGO01: Maintain or restore desired plant community components, including species composition, size classes, canopy closures, structure, snags, and coarse woody debris as described in Appendix A. *(Forest Plan, p. III-30)*

Goal VEGGO04: Maintain or restore distribution and abundance of habitats that contribute to viable populations of existing native and desirable non-native plant, fish, and wildlife species. (*Forest Plan, p. III-30)*

Goal TRGO01 Manage forested vegetation to achieve:

- Conditions that are resilient and resistant to uncharacteristic fire, insect, and disease damage,
- Conditions that contribute to desired vegetative conditions, including, distribution of tree sizes, species composition, and canopy cover *(Forest Plan, p. III-41).*

Goal TRGO02 Manage suited timberlands to achieve:

- Growth rates and yields that are compatible with other resources,
- Annual harvest of expected timber volume,
- Maintenance of improvement, where possible, of genetic diversity within tree species,
- Successful reforestation through the application of appropriate and available silvicultural techniques,
- Vegetative conditions (structure, density, etc.) in plantations and surrounding stands that result in reduced hazard for loss from uncharacteristic disturbance events, and
- Sustained yield, even flow of high-quality forest products, including timber and non-timber forest products (*Forest Plan, p. III-41).*

Objectives TROB02 and SEOB01are both advanced by the proposed project's purpose to provide commercial timber supporting local and regional economies:

Objective TROB02 Make available an estimated 450 million board feet of timber for the decade, which will contribute to Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ). *(Forest Plan, p. III-42)*

Objective SEOB01 Provide a predictable supply of Forest goods and services within sustainable limits of the ecosystem that help meet public demand. (*Forest Plan, p. III-77)*

Proposed road decommissioning and year-round motorized closures will move the Forest toward desired soil, water, riparian and aquatic conditions as well as limit weed spread by helping achieve a variety of Plan goals and objectives:

Objective 1417 Maintain or restore migratory habitat in the Middle Fork of the Payette River for bull trout and other resident native fish. *(Forest Plan, p. III-262)*

Objective 1418 Maintain or improve headwater streams for spawning and rearing habitats of native fish. *(Forest Plan, p. III-262)*

Objective 1419 Initiate restoration of watershed conditions and fish habitat in the Anderson Creek subwatershed to help strengthen the local bull trout population. *(Forest Plan, p. III-262)*

Objective 1420 Cooperate and participate with the State of Idaho for implementation of the TMDL for the Middle Fork of the Payette River. *(Forest Plan, p. III-262)*

Objective 1458 Reduce road-related impacts to wildlife, fish, soil, and water resources through road reconstruction and rehabilitation, or decommissioning, with emphasis on the Anderson Creek, Cow Creek, Wetfoot, Sixmile, and Scriver Creek drainages. *(Forest Plan, p. III-265)*

SWOB18 Reduce road-related effects on soil productivity, water quality, and aquatic/riparian species and their habitats. Refer to the Watershed and Aquatic Recovery Strategy (WARS) for mid-scale

prioritization indicators to assist in fine and site/project restoration prioritization planning. *(Forest Plan, p. III-21)*

FROB04 During fine-scale analyses, identify opportunities to reduce road-related degrading effects to help achieve other resource objectives. *(Forest Plan, p. III-58)*

FROB06 Identify roads and facilities that are not needed for land and resource management, and evaluate for disposal or decommissioning. *(Forest Plan, p. III-59)*

Objective 1442 Evaluate and incorporate methods to help prevent weed establishment and spread from off-road ATV/motorbike use in the Pyle Creek, Scriver Creek, Anderson Creek, and Sixmile Creek subwatersheds. Consider annual weed inspection and treatment of trailheads, campgrounds, and other high-use areas; and posting educational notices in these areas to inform the public of areas that are highly susceptible to weed invasion and measures they can take to help prevent weed establishment and spread. *(Forest Plan, p. III-263)*

Salvaging hazard trees threatening users and use of the Sixmile road (NFS road 670) would further:

FRGO01 Provide and maintain a safe, efficient Forest transportation system that meets resource management and access needs, while mitigating degrading resource effects. *(Forest Plan, p. III-58)*

FROB03 Identify safety hazards on Forest classified roads, establish improvement priorities, correct or mitigate the hazard. *(Forest Plan, p. III-58)*

REGO05 Manage motorized and non-motorized travel and travel-related facilities to:
a) Provide for public safety,
b) Meet resource objectives and access needs,
c) Mitigate road and trail damage, and
d) Minimize maintenance costs and user conflicts. *(Forest Plan, p. III-62)*

DECISION

I have reviewed the analysis presented in the EA for the Middle Fork Salvage Project, considered the comments received on the Proposed Action Report, and discussed the project's anticipated effects with both the Interdisciplinary Team and Forest Staff. As a result, I have decided to implement **Alternative C.** My decision includes salvaging fire-killed and imminently dead trees greater than 8 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) on about 1,077 acres burned at moderate and high intensity within specified units of the Lucky and Lightning fires, falling and removing hazard trees along 1.1 miles of the Sixmile road (NFS road 670), planting approximately 652 acres with native conifer seedlings emphasizing ponderosa pine, maintaining about 34.7 miles of authorized road to facilitate salvage activities, decommissioning about 2.2 miles of authorized roads and 7.0 miles of unauthorized roads, blocking motorized access to about 0.2 miles of an unauthorized road, converting the last 1.2 miles of an authorized road to nonmotorized trail, and administratively closing to year-round motorized use about 7.2 miles of authorized roads following vegetative activities.

Attachment A of this document describes the details of my decision, including incorporated design features, and Figures DN-1 and DN-2 discloses the locations of these activities. **Attachment B** documents monitoring associated with my decision. My conclusion is based on a review of the record that shows relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information.

Specifically, I am making the following decisions:

1. Which, if any, areas will be salvage harvested and associated authorized roads maintained to facilitate harvest activities?

My decision will salvage approximately 3.7 million board feet (MMBF) (6,473 hundred cubic feet [CCF]) of fire-killed and imminently dead timber from designated harvest units within the Lucky and Lightning fire areas. Fire-killed and imminently dead trees greater than 8 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) will be salvage harvested within lands assigned to Forest Plan MPC 5.2 that experienced moderate to high fire mortality using both ground-based and aerial yarding systems. A total of about 705 acres will be salvaged using tractor/off-road jammer yarding, in both fire areas. About 372 acres will be salvaged by helicopter yarding in the Lucky Fire area, using five one-acre helicopter landings. One of these landings exists; the remaining four would be constructed.

A total of 34.7 miles of authorized road will be maintained to facilitate salvage activities. Treatment activities will include one or more of the following: road surface blading, culvert replacement, cleaning culverts, widening roads to minimum road width, clearing roadways and ditches, road watering, seeding and mulching of new slopes around culvert outlets, and repair of fill failure. In the Lucky fire area, these roads include NFS roads 670Y (2.7 miles), 600 (1.0 miles), 670 (2.2 miles), 698 (10.9 miles). In the Lightning fire area, these roads include NFS roads 668 road (13.8 miles), 668B (2.0 miles) and 668C (2.1 miles).

No road construction will occur.

Individual tree marking will be done to retain snags needed for wildlife, coarse woody debris, and soils, and to identify hazard trees. No salvage will occur with Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs), except for identified hazard tree removal. No salvage will occur within the Peace Rock Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA).

2. Which, if any, burned areas will be reforested?

Approximately 652 acres will be planted with native conifer seedlings emphasizing ponderosa pine within lands assigned to MPC 5.2, including about 54 acres within the eligible Wild and Scenic (Recreational) segment of the Middle Fork Payette River (Lucky Fire area). No planting will occur within the lands assigned to MPC 4.1c (Peace Rock IRA in the Lightning Fire area).

3. Which, if any, roads will have adjacent hazard trees salvaged to improve public safety?

Dead, imminently dead, and weakened trees (hazard trees) jeopardizing public safety along about 1.1 miles of the Sixmile Creek road (NFS road 670) within the Lucky Fire area will be cut. Cut trees within one site potential tree height of streams will be left on site, unless they would affect road and/or culvert function. Other cut trees will be removed. “Hazard trees” are defined as those where an identifiable condition or defect could result in failure causing property damage or personal injury. The hazard a dead or weakened tree represents depends on the type of activity occurring near it, the duration of exposure to the hazard, the frequency of the exposures, the potential failure zone relative to the traveled portion of the road or adjacent work areas, and whether a tree’s failure is imminent or likely. Persons qualified to assess a tree’s potential to fail, potential failure zones, the nature of nearby activity, and whether a hazard exists if failure occurs, will determine which trees along NFS 670 constitute hazard trees.

4. Which, if any, authorized roads and unauthorized roads should be decommissioned to improve watershed conditions, reduce long-term sedimentation, and reduce impacts to wildlife, fish and soil?

Approximately 2.2 miles of authorized (NFS) road will be decommissioned, and about 7.0 miles of unauthorized road will also be decommissioned with one or more of the following actions: recontouring up to sight distance from road junctions, barricading, removing existing culverts and stabilizing stream crossings, building long-term drainage structures such as waterbars and rolling dips, and scarifying or ripping the road bed followed by seeding road surfaces. Authorized roads that will be decommissioned are NFS roads 668D, 668E, 668B1, and 668B beyond two miles from its junction with NFS road 668. An additional 0.2 miles of unauthorized road X668B2 will have motorized access blocked from an adjoining authorized road (NFS road 668B) by placing boulders and/or berms near the junction.

Authorized and unauthorized roads to be decommissioned are listed below. Of the unauthorized roads to be decommissioned, about 3.2 miles of roads X555BCX1, X668BX2, X668BX7, X668BX3, and X668BX5 lie within the Peace Rock IRA.

Road	Authorized/Unauthorized	Length
668B1	Authorized	0.54 miles
668D	Authorized	0.72 miles
668E	Authorized	0.93 miles
X555BCX1	Unauthorized	1.60 miles
X668BX1	Unauthorized	0.31 miles
X668BX2	Unauthorized	0.57 miles
X668BX3	Unauthorized	0.18 miles
X668BX5	Unauthorized	0.26 miles
X668BX6	Unauthorized	1.04 miles
X668BX7	Unauthorized	0.25 miles
X668BX8	Unauthorized	0.14 miles
X668CX1	Unauthorized	0.99 miles
X668X1	Unauthorized	0.76 miles
X668X1A	Unauthorized	0.11 miles
X668X2	Unauthorized	0.10 miles
X668X3	Unauthorized	0.02 miles
X668X4	Unauthorized	0.08 miles
X668X5	Unauthorized	0.13 miles

5. Which, if any, authorized roads should be closed, except for administrative use, year-long to motorized traffic to improve watershed conditions, reduce long-term sedimentation, and reduce impacts to wildlife, fish and soil?

About 7.2 miles of authorized road will be administratively closed to motorized use year long, including NFS roads 668C, 668H, 668I, 668J, 668K, 668 westward of its junction with 668E, and 668B beginning 1.2 miles from its junction with road 668 and extending about 0.6 mile.

Road	Length
668	0.07 miles*****
668B	0.60 miles
668C	2.68 miles
668H	0.73 miles
668I	0.48 miles
668J	0.70 miles
668K	1.95 miles

*****This value represents the length of the yearlong closure within the project area. The closure will effectively close the remainder of the road (about 7.7 miles) to motorized use for public safety.

6. Which, if any, authorized roads should be converted to non-motorized trail?

The last 1.2 miles of NFS road 668B will be converted to non-motorized trail.

7. Based on the completed Lightning Fire Roads Analysis, which roads within the Lightning Fire analysis area should be adopted as the minimum transportation system?

As identified in the Lightning Fire Roads Analysis (included in the project record) completed to inform my decision, the road network supports a variety of uses. Based on the Roads Analysis and the analysis completed in the EA, I have determined that about 2.2 miles of authorized (NFS) road and about 7.0 miles of unauthorized road are not needed to support management of the Forest or recreational uses and will be decommissioned. In addition, about 7.2 miles of authorized road will be administratively closed to motorized use year long (except for administrative use), and the last 1.2 miles of NFS road 668B will be converted to non-motorized trail. I have determined that all other NFS roads within the Lightning Fire Roads Analysis area are needed for management of the Forest, as well as providing the public reasonable access to pursue their recreational activities in the area. This transportation plan will be adopted as part of the minimum road system. No new roads will be constructed.

8. What design features and/or mitigation measures should be applied to activities to reduce unacceptable environmental impacts?

My decision includes a number of design features incorporated to minimize or avoid effects on a variety of resources such as water quality, fisheries, recreation, visuals, and wildlife. Reference **Attachment A** of this document for a complete list of design features associated with my decision.

RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION

In making a decision on this project, I evaluated the environmental and economic effects disclosed in the EA for each alternative in relation to Forest Plan direction and existing laws. I also considered public comments received during scoping and the 30-day notice and comment period for the Proposed Action Report. I have concluded that Alternative C represents the best approach to responding to economic opportunities, public safety, and moving towards Forest Plan desired conditions, particularly for vegetation and water quality. Since Alternatives B and C are identical except for reforestation within the Peace Rock IRA, which is included in Alternative B but not Alternative C, the alternatives' effects differ only in the anticipated effect to the Peace Rock IRA (EA, Chapter 3). The analysis in the EA indicates this activity would not affect any future consideration for wilderness designation of any portion of the Peace Rock IRA (EA, section 3.10). However, I did not find any compelling reason to enter the IRA in order to plant 132 acres. By not reforesting these 132 acres in the Peace Rock IRA, the acres will regenerate naturally over time, possibly over several decades, given the lack of a suitable seed source in many areas (EA, section 3.2.8.3). I find this reliance on natural regeneration an acceptable outcome in this area. Therefore, after reviewing public comments requesting that no planting within the IRA, I selected Alternative C.

The following discussions summarize the rationale for my decision.

1. Which, if any, areas will be salvage harvested and associated authorized roads maintained to facilitate harvest activities?

My decision related to salvage harvest will meet the purpose and need identified for this project by providing commercial timber supporting local and regional sawmills, employment, and economies by salvaging fire-killed and dying trees from lands assigned to MPC 5.2 lands within the 2007 Lucky and Lightning fire areas. As described in Chapter 1 of the EA, the analysis indicates that this decision is consistent with Forest Plan direction for the area. I am also confident that the design features (EA, section 2.3.1; Attachment A of this decision) included as part of the decision will not result in any long term effects to other resources; more detail on many of these design features is provided below.

The vegetation analysis indicates that removal of fire killed dead and dying trees does little to affect the live forest components such as tree canopy cover, species composition, and tree size class. Although some fire-killed or imminently dead trees may be removed that could actually survive the wildfire, the number of trees likely to fall under this scenario will be minor and certainly not present in quantities

sufficient to convert any particular stand from one size class to another. As a result, my decision will not reduce the number of acres considered to be in the "large-tree" size class (EA, section 3.2.4).

Immediately following harvest, snag densities will be reduced on roughly 1,077 acres of harvest units within 8,576 acres affected by the Lucky and Lightning fires. After reviewing the preliminary analysis, which showed that large-diameter (greater than 20-inch dbh) snags would remain at the low end of desired conditions following salvage, and considering the scientific uncertainty associated with the data collected (i.e. the relatively small sample size of 60 1/5-acre cruise plots), I modified in the EA and this decision the snag retention design feature described in the Proposed Action Report so that all large (greater than 20-inch dbh) fire-killed ponderosa pine snags will be retained. This modification results in an average of about 2.2 large fire-killed ponderosa pine snags retained per acre (*EA, section 3.2.7).* The analysis in the EA indicates that with this change, the snag densities in salvage units will remain within the range for large snags recommended for species such as the white-headed woodpecker and fall within the desired conditions outlined in the Forest Plan for both size categories of snags (*EA, section 3.13.3.3*). Specifically, this snag retention design feature will result in an average of 4.1 fire-killed snags per acre in the salvage units, comprised of an average of 2 snags per acre in the 10-20" dbh size class and an average of about 2.1 snags/acres of ponderosa pine >20" dbh (*EA, section 3.14*). Comparing this to the snag desired conditions in the Forest Plan (Forest Plan, p. A-9 [Table A-8]), I conclude that fire-killed snags retained by this design feature will fall in the upper end of the desired condition range for PVGs 2 and 4.

Although other wildlife species might be impacted from the other project activities (i.e. road modifications, reforestation, disturbance), altering snag densities has the most potential to affect white-headed woodpecker, Lewis's woodpecker, and black-backed woodpecker. Considering the snag retention design feature (resulting in an average of 4.1 fire-killed snags per acre in the salvage units, comprised of an average of 2 snags per acre in the 10-20" dbh size class and all ponderosa pine >20" dbh {average of 2.1 snags/acre}), the black-backed woodpecker will be most likely to experience negative impacts since it is positively associated with recently burned areas exhibiting dense snag conditions. Lewis's woodpeckers, along with white-headed woodpeckers, will be less likely to experience negative impacts because they are associated with more open stands containing large snags, with Lewis's showing an association of snags with advanced decay (weak excavators that aerial-hawk insects). The analysis shows that the action alternatives have the potential to negatively affect all three species but impacts will be localized and will have an inconsequential effect to their populations (*EA, section 3.13.3.4*).

My decision will have an immeasurable increase in sediment delivery to project area streams in the temporary and short-term timeframes and in the long-term have an immeasurable decrease in sediment delivery to streams *(EA, section 3.15.5).* All Watershed Condition Indices (WCIs) evaluated will be maintained or not influenced in both Sixmile and Anderson subwatersheds *(EA, section 3.15.6).* As a result, municipal watersheds and designated beneficial uses will not be degraded with implementation of the project design features and Best Management Practices (BMPs) *(EA, section 3.15.5).*

All salvage units in the Lucky and Lightning fire areas will trend towards Detrimental Disturbance (DD) levels of 15 percent or less by 2011 and will meet Forest Plan standard SWST02 based on recovery of the DD effects associated with severely burned soils *(EA, section 3.16.3).* Following project implementation, the Lightning and Lucky activity areas would meet the Forest Plan standard SWST03, with Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) remaining below 5 percent for the activity areas *(EA, section 3.16.3).*

Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) levels will be anticipated to meet the 4 to 15 tons per acre recommended by the Forest Plan for the Potential Vegetation Groups (PVGs) in the Lucky and Lightning fire areas, respectively (*EA, section 3.16.3).* Because no trees less than 8 inches dbh will be salvaged, CWD will be recruited from existing 3 – 8 inch dbh fire-killed snags. In addition, in the short- to long-term timeframes, design feature WL-1 would provide recruitment of CWD greater in diameter. Based on snag longevity, the predicted half-life for ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir snags in salvaged logged areas are 7 – 8 years, and 12 – 13 years, respectively (Russell et al., 2006). Filed observations of the Airline Vegetation Management Project in the Lightning Creek subwatershed did not indicate any increase in slope instability following harvest operations. The areas treated in the Airline project have similar landtypes and

PVGs as the Middle Fork Salvage project area. Under my decision, design features (including SW-11) applied to the Middle Fork project are expected to reduce the potential for negative effects to slope stability (*EA, section 3.16.3).*

My decision will not have an adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on any threatened or endangered species within or outside the project area *(EA, sections 3.5, 3.13, 3.15).* . Determinations disclosed in the EA have concluded that my decision will have "no effect" on the threatened Canada lynx, northern Idaho ground squirrel, and "no impact" to the candidate yellow-billed cuckoo or southern Idaho ground squirrel *(EA, section 3.13.3).* My decision "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" bull trout and *Spiranthes diluvialis (EA, sections 3.5.1 and 3.15.8*). On June 6, 2008, the US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the determinations for these species as appropriate.

2. Which, if any, burned areas will be reforested?

I am confident that reforestation is consistent with both the needs of the area as well as meeting management direction provided by the Forest Plan. Several of the areas within the wildfire have been burned repeatedly within the last 15 years (Project Record, Watershed and Soil Resources Specialist Report).

Reforesting 598 acres within lands assigned to MPC 5.2 will accelerate forest re-establishment more quickly than if these acres revegetated naturally (*EA, section 3.28*). Reforesting 54 acres in the corridor of the Middle Fork Payette River eligible for Wild and Scenic classification will restore a forested appearance more quickly but will not affect the free flowing character, Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs), or potential Recreational classification of this segment (*EA, section 3.8*). Reforestation will ultimately benefit some wildlife species tied to forested conditions, as a transition from grass/forb/seedling stages to seedling/sapling on the reforested acres is more quickly achieved (*EA, section 3.13)***.**

3. Which, if any, roads will have adjacent hazard trees salvaged to improve public safety?

My decision to remove hazard trees adjacent to the Sixmile road (NFS road 670) maintains public safety. NFS road 670 receives moderate to heavy public use and the fire burned approximately 1.1 miles immediately adjacent and up hill from Middle Fork Payette River road (NFS road 698). Along NFS road 670, individual hazard trees will be evaluated using established criteria (*EA, section 2.3.3.2*). Cut trees within one site potential tree height of streams would be left on site, unless they would affect road and/or culvert function. This section of NFS road 670 lies within the corridor of the Middle Fork Payette River eligible for Wild and Scenic classification. Hazard tree removal will not affect the free flowing character, Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs), or potential Recreational classification of the eligible segment (*EA, section 3.8.3)*. In addition, cutting hazard trees will not affect the ability to meet Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) within and adjacent to the project area (*EA, section 3.9*).

4. Which, if any, authorized roads and unauthorized roads should be decommissioned to improve watershed conditions, reduce long-term sedimentation, and reduce impacts to wildlife, fish and soil?

The minimum transportation system for the area surrounding the Lucky Fire was established as part of the decision for the Sixshooter Project made in June 2006; road treatments prescribed as part of that decision are currently being implemented. I did not believe that, given the size of the Lucky Fire, this analysis needed to be revisited. However, the Lightning fire occurs within a Forest Plan designated Aquatic Conservation Strategy Priority watershed (Project Record, Fisheries Specialist Report and Watershed and Soil Resources Specialist Report). The Roads Analysis completed for the Lightning Fire indicated that the many of the roads within the project area received infrequent maintenance, were experiencing erosion, and were not needed for anticipated future management (Project record, Lightning Fire Area Roads Analysis). I believe my decision to decommission these roads represents the best approach to work toward sediment reduction goals established in the Middle Fork Payette River Sediment and Temperature Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) as well as reduce impacts to wildlife, fish, and soils (*EA, section 3.13, 3.15, and 3.16*).

5. Which, if any, authorized roads should be closed, except for administrative use, year-long to motorized traffic to improve watershed conditions, reduce long-term sedimentation, and reduce impacts to wildlife, fish and soil?

About 7.2 miles of authorized road will be administratively closed to motorized use year long, including NFS roads 668C, 668H, 668I, 668J, 668K, 668 westward of its junction with 668E, and 668B beginning 1.2 miles from its junction with road 668 and extending about 0.6 mile. The Roads Analysis completed for the Lightning Fire Area showed that anticipated future management activities, such as tree planting, and precommercial thinning, would require infrequent future access. My decision to close these roads, except for administrative use, provides for future management while still reducing road related impacts to wildlife (reduction in elk vulnerability (*EA, section 3.13.2*), watershed and fish (reduction in sedimentation (*EA, section 3.15.5*), and soils (reduction in detrimental disturbance and Total Soil Resource Commitment (TSRC) (*EA, section3.16*).

6. Which, if any, authorized roads should be converted to non-motorized trail

My decision to convert a portion of NFS 668B to a non-motorized trail reflects the results of both the roads analysis of the area and my knowledge of dispersed recreation within Lightning Fire area. NFS 668B has received little maintenance in the past and has experienced considerable erosion. Conversion to a non-motorized trail should provide foot and horse access to other trails in the area. Motorized trails in and adjacent to the project area can be accessed by existing motorized trails.

7. Based on the completed Lightning Fire Roads Analysis, which roads within the Lightning Fire analysis area should be adopted as the minimum transportation system?

My decision provides for public access to both the Lucky and Lightning fire area while reducing road related impacts within the Lightning area. This level of access will maintain public access to the general area while reducing road related impacts to other resources. I am satisfied that public access to the Anderson Creek and Granite Basin area will be maintained through maintaining the NFS road 668 open.

8. What design features and/or mitigation measures should be applied to activities to reduce unacceptable environmental impacts?

In addition to those features discussed above, my decision includes a number of design features incorporated not only ensure post-fire ecological recovery is not retarded, but also to minimize or avoid effects on a variety of resources such as recreation, visuals, watershed, fisheries, wildlife, soils, and cultural resources. Reference Attachment A of this document for a complete listing of those design features.

PUBLIC AND OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Shoshone-Paiute tribal representatives were presented the Middle Fork Salvage Project's proposed activities at the September 13, 2007 Wings and Roots meeting. Tribal Chairs of both the Nez Perce and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were mailed project proposals on December 13, 2007. During September and October 2007 the Emmett District Ranger presented aspects of the proposed salvage project to representatives of the Idaho Conservation League and The Wilderness Society while conducting field trips for them to the Middle Fork Complex fire area. The proposed Middle Fork Salvage Project has been listed in the Boise NF Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) since October 2007. On February 5th 2008, Forest Service representatives presented specific proposed project activities to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries personnel at a scheduled Level 1 Meeting. In addition to legal notices published in the *Messenger Index* (December 12, 2007), *Idaho World* (January 24, 2007), *Long Valley Advocate* (December 12, 2007), and *Idaho Statesman* (December 12, 2007), a scoping package describing the Proposed Action was mailed to 41 individuals, agencies, and/or groups on December 13, 2007. Seven interested parties responded.

Respondents expressed a variety of concerns and opinions expressing both support and opposition to the road decommissioning aspects of the project. One respondent was adamantly opposed to all fire salvage

harvest in all situations. Two other commenters were conditionally amenable to salvage logging on lands assigned to MPC 5.2 lands provided road decommissioning and achievement of Forest Plan direction for other resources occurred.

One commenter requested that the project not plant tree seedlings on burned areas within the Peace Rock IRA (MPC 4.1c), because the commenter believes that by not planting seedlings, the variability of the composition, structure, and age of vegetation within the Peace Rock IRA would be enhanced. This commenter was also concerned about future management activities that might be necessitated by a plantation within the IRA.

Based on these comments, the Responsible Official determined reforesting within the Peace Rock IRA presented a "significant issue" with the Proposed Action. (Significant issues are specific unresolved concerns about the Proposed Action that cannot be successfully addressed with mitigation or project design, yet are within the project's scope and would allow accomplishment of at least part of its stated purpose). As a result, the Responsible Official directed the Interdisciplinary Team to develop Alternative C, which does not include planting in the Peace Rock IRA, to clearly display the effects and tradeoffs if this planting were eliminated.

The planning record contains all written comments received during scoping and discloses how the Interdisciplinary Team addressed those concerns.

On May 13, 2008, a legal notice announcing the 30-day notice and comment period for the Middle Fork Salvage Proposed Action Report was published in the *Idaho Statesman*, the newspaper of record for Boise Forest Supervisor decisions. A courtesy copy of the legal notice was published in the *Idaho World* on the same day. In addition, the Proposed Action Report and cover letter were mailed to the seven individuals who commented during scoping. A total of five commenters responded during the 30-day notice and comment period. Appendix D of the EA includes the responses to these comments.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two other alternatives were considered in the Middle Fork Salvage analysis:

Alternative A (No Action) – This is a required "no action" alternative that provides a baseline against which impacts of the various action alternatives can be measured and compared. Under this alternative no new management activities would occur, although all other ongoing activities (e.g. dispersed recreation, public fuelwood gathering, wildfire suppression, current travel management restrictions, etc.) would continue in the area.

This alternative was not selected because it did not meet the purpose and need of the project. Specifically, this alternative would not provide opportunities for commercial use of dead and dying trees, improve watersheds, or restore forested vegetative conditions.

Alternative B (Proposed Action) – Alternative B is almost identical to Alternative C except Alternative B would reforest within the Peace Rock IRA. This alternative was not selected because although the analysis in the EA indicates this activity would not affect any future consideration for wilderness designation of any portion of the Peace Rock IRA, I did not find any compelling reason to enter the IRA in order to plant 132 acres.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE FOREST PLAN, NFMA, AND OTHER LAWS

Forest Plan

Long-term management direction for the project area is provided in the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Boise National Forest (Forest Plan) and the *Southwest Idaho Ecogroup Land and Resource Management Plans Final Environmental Impact Statement* (2003). Chapter III of the Forest Plan describes management direction to guide Forest personnel to achieve desired outcomes and conditions

for both land stewardship and public service. This direction is presented in two sections: (1) Forest-wide Management Direction, and (2) Management Area Description and Direction. The Forest-wide management direction provides general direction for all Forest resources and the foundation for more specific direction at the management area level. The management area description and direction describes these areas in detail, highlights resource areas of importance or concern, and prescribes specific management direction to address these concerns. Activities within the various management areas are further directed by management prescription categories (MPCs). MPCs are broad categories of management prescriptions that indicate the general management emphasis prescribed for a given area.

The entire project area lies within Management Area 14 (Lower Middle Fork Payette River), discussed on pages III-254 through III-365 in the Forest Plan. Several MPCs apply within this Management Area (MA), and MPC 4.1c, MPC 5.1, and MPC 5.2 occur within the project area. However, management activities are proposed only in MPC 4.1c and MPC 5.2. The three MPCs are described below and on pages III-87 through III-89 of the Forest Plan.

I have evaluated the features of my decision against the Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for consistency with the Forest Plan. As documented in the EA (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) and the Forest Plan consistency table in the project record, my decision will be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan.

National Forest Management Act (NFMA)

Suitability for Timber Production. No timber harvest, other than salvage sales or sales to protect other multiple-use values, shall occur on lands not suited for timber production [16 U.S.C. 1604(k)].

Because timber harvest authorized under this decision is limited to salvage cutting and hazard tree removal (which is designed to protect public safety), this stipulation is not applicable to the project.

Clearcutting and Even-aged Management. Clearcutting will be used as a cutting method where it is determined to be the optimum method. Seed tree and shelterwood silvicultural prescriptions, which are designed to regenerate an even-aged stand of timber, will be used where determined to be the appropriate methods to meet the objectives and requirements in the Forest Plan [1604(g)(3)(F)(i)].

(a) *Determination that where used, clearcutting is the optimum method:*

My decision includes removal of fire-killed and imminently dead trees only. No clearcutting will occur (*EA, Section 2.3.3.2*).

(b) *Determination that even-aged silvicultural prescriptions are appropriate to meet objectives and requirements in the Forest Plan:*

No even-aged silvicultural prescriptions will be applied under my decision (*EA, Section* 2.3.3.2)

Vegetation Manipulation. Vegetative manipulation of tree cover must comply with the seven requirements in 36 CFR 219.27(b).

Management activities associated with my decision will be limited to the cutting of fire-killed and imminently dead trees. Stipulations related to vegetation manipulation at 36 CFR 219.27(b) do not apply (*EA, Section 2.3.3.2*).

Other Laws

My decision is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Specifically:

***Endangered Species Act*:** Determinations disclosed in the EA have concluded that my decision "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" *Spiranthes diluvialis* (*EA, Section 3.5.1.6*), will have "no effect"

on Canada lynx and northern Idaho ground squirrel (*EA, Section 3.3.13.3.2)*, and "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" bull trout (*EA, Section 33.15.8.3*). On June 6, 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with these determinations where required.

Clean Air Act: Smoke from the prescribed burning of activity fuels will temporarily reduce air quality. Burning landing piles will likely occur in the fall months and will be scheduled to occur when fuel moistures and atmospheric conditions are conducive to meeting resource objectives. Both the Lucky and Lightning project areas were modeled for a day of landing slash pile burning without wind offset to estimate a "worst case" scenario. Because of the limited amount of prescribed burning that will occur, modeling indicated that the project-generated particulates, combined with average ambient pollutants, will remain below regulatory thresholds (i.e., EPA established standards) in sensitive areas (*EA, Section 3.12*).

***National Historic Preservation Act*:** Alternative B is not expected to have any direct or indirect effects on historically significant sites. Previously identified sites will be protected (*EA, Section 2.3.1; Attachment A*). The State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed the resource report and on May 21, 2008, concurred with the no adverse effects determination. Contract provisions that would halt all degrading activities will be included to prevent adverse impacts to any unknown sites discovered during implementation (*Attachment A; EA, Section 2.3.1*).

***Clean Water Act*:** Project activities are expected to meet all applicable State of Idaho water quality standards. Implementing my decision is expected to have an immeasurable increase in sediment delivery to project area streams in the temporary and short-term timeframes (*EA, Section 3.15.5.2),* and in the long term, will have an immeasurable decrease in sediment delivery to streams (*EA, Section 3.15.5.2).* BOISED modeling indicated a reduction of management-induced sediment in the long-term in both the Sixmile and Anderson subwatersheds *(EA, Section 3.15.5.2).* The reduction in the modeled sediment yield is attributable to amelioration of wildfire effect over time and benefits from project activities including road maintenance, yearlong-road closures to motorized access, and road decommissioning. Municipal watersheds and designated beneficial uses will not be degraded by project activities with application of design features and BMPs *(EA, Section 3.15.5.2).*

***Migratory Bird Treaty Act*:** My decision will comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This project may however result in an "unintentional take" of individuals during proposed activities. However the project complies with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director's Order #131 related to the applicability of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to federal agencies and requirements for permits for "take." In addition, this project complies with Executive Order 13186 because the analysis meets agency obligations as defined under the January 16, 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designed to complement Executive Order 13186. Migratory bird species are also analyzed and discussed in Section 3.13.3.5 of the EA. If new requirements or direction result from subsequent interagency memorandums of understanding pursuant to Executive Order 13186, this project will be reevaluated to ensure that it is consistent (*EA, Appendix A*).

***Idaho Forest Practices Act*:** Rules pertaining to the Idaho Forest Practices Act will be implemented. In addition, logging operations associated with my decision will be supervised and monitored on the ground to ensure compliance with the timber sale contract (*DN/FONSI, Attachment B*).

***Idaho Stream Alteration Act*:** My decision will adhere to the requirements of the Idaho Stream Alterations Act and the 404 Permit Process of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The goals of Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 will be met *(Project Record, Watershed and Soil Resources Specialist Report).*

Consultation with Tribal Governments (E.O. 13175) – This order established a requirement for regular and meaningful consultation between federal and tribal government officials on federal policies that have tribal implications.

Three federally recognized Native American tribes have expressed interest in activities proposed in this area: Nez Perce, Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Shoshone-Paiute tribal representatives were presented the proposed Middle Fork Salvage project at the September 13, 2007

Wings and Roots meeting. Wings and Roots meetings are an official part of the consultation process between the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe and the Boise NF. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe considers the Wings and Roots meetings as a form of "technical" consultation and uses this process to help assess the need for formal consultation. Tribal Chairs of both the Nez Perce and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were mailed project proposals on December 13, 2007. The tribal notification and subsequent consultation processes described above did not result in the identification of any adverse effects to tribal interests or rights specifically associated with this project.

Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation (E.O. 13443) - On August 16, 2007, President George Bush signed an Executive Order directing appropriate federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat. My decision is not expected to impact the quality of elk/mule deer winter forage. Any impacts will be minimal, however, as only dead and dying trees will be removed and these trees contribute little to the quality of hiding cover. Reduction in road densities will reduce elk and deer vulnerability to hunting (*EA, section 3.13.2*).

Best Available Science – The conclusions disclosed in the EA and summarized in this document are based on a review of the project's record that reflects consideration of relevant scientific information and responsible opposing views where raised by internal or external sources, and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and/or risk where pertinent to the decision being made.

I have reviewed opposing opinions regarding salvage harvest (*EA, Appendix D)*. While issues associated with salvage harvest are identified in the literature, none are site specific to the project area.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined that this decision is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, either individually or cumulatively. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Section 102 (2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is not required. This determination is based on the following factors as outlined in 40 CFR 1508.27.

1. The selected alternative will be limited in geographic application [40 CFR 1508.27(a)].

Activities associated with my decision will be confined to the 15,435-acre project area described in the EA and will be limited to those actions disclosed in that document and its appendices. Further, this action will be consistent with the management area prescription and Forest Plan standards and guidelines specified for the area (*EA, Sections 1.5, 1.7; Forest Plan consistency table in the project record*).

2. My decision will not result in any significant beneficial or adverse effects [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)].

The analysis documented in Chapter 3 of the EA did not identify any individually or cumulatively significant impacts resulting from implementation of Alternative C (*EA, Chapter 3*).

3. The selected alternative will not result in substantive effects on public health or safety [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)].

My decision will reduce roadside hazard trees along NFS road 670 and therefore enhance public safety. In addition, design features associated with my decision will minimize the potential impacts on users of the area during implementation, including a prohibition on log haul on weekends, all major holidays, and the opening day of deer, elk and turkey general hunting seasons, and posting of warning signs on main roads to inform the public of logging operations and truck traffic (*EA, Section 2.3.1; Attachment A).*

4. My decision will not result in any significant effects on any unique characteristics of the geographic area, historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)].

The analysis documented in the EA discloses that Alternative B will not result in any major effects on roadless resources (*EA, Section 3.10*), wild and scenic rivers (*EA, Section 3.8*), cultural or historic resources (*EA, Section 3.11*), or wetlands (*EA, Section 2.1; Attachment A*).

5. The selected alternative will not result in any effects that are likely to be highly controversial [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)].

Controversy in this context refers to situations where there is substantial dispute as to the size, nature, or effect of the Federal action, rather than opposition to its implementation. The scientific basis for the analysis is contained in the project record and summarized in the EA. Standard analysis techniques and models were used and limitations of those models summarized in the EA where pertinent. Literature supporting the use of these models, as used in this analysis, is contained in the project's planning record (*EA, Chapter 3*).

6. The effects associated with the selected Alternative C will not result in any highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)].

The environmental analysis, including the EA, resource technical reports, Biological Assessments, and Biological Evaluations (contained in the planning record), determined that the selected alternative will not involve any highly uncertain or unknown risks. The management activities associated with my decision are typical of those successfully implemented in the past on National Forest lands.

7. My decision does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)].

My decision is consistent with direction found in the Forest Plan. Implementation of my decision will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

8. The analysis documented in the EA discloses that my decision will not result in any significant short-term, long-term, or cumulative effects [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)].

Chapter 3 of the EA discloses that Alternative C will not result in any known significant temporary, short term, long term, or cumulative effects.

9. My decision will not adversely affect sites or objects listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)].

The assessment disclosed in the EA was initiated following review of previous cultural resource surveys completed in the area, as well as surveys completed in the fall of 2007. The State Historic Preservation Officer has reviewed the resource report and concurred with the no adverse effects determination. My decision will not result in any major effects on cultural or historic resources (*EA, Section 3.11*) or roadless resources (*EA, Section 3.10*).

10. My decision will not adversely affect threatened or endangered species or their habitats [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)].

Determinations disclosed in the EA have concluded that my decision "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" *Spiranthes diluvialis* (*EA, Section 3.5.1.6*), will have "no effect" on Canada lynx and northern Idaho ground squirrel (*EA, Section 3.13.3.2)*, and "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" bull trout (*EA, Section 315.8.3*). On June 6, 2008, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with these determinations where required.

11. My decision is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws and requirements imposed for the protection of the environment [40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)].

Chapter 1 of the EA (Section 1.9) summarizes consistency of the selected alternative with applicable laws and regulations relating to federal natural resource management, and Appendix A of the EA provides additional information. Chapter 3 of the EA and the project's planning record provides supporting information.

IMPLEMENTATION AND APPEAL RIGHTS

Sale advertisement is tentatively scheduled to occur in the summer of 2008 with harvest occurring primarily in 2008, with lesser amounts possibly in 2009. Burning of slash accumulated at landings, reforestation, and road decommissioning is expected to be completed by the fall of 2010.

This decision is subject to administrative appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215, only by those individuals and organizations who provided comments or otherwise expressed interest during the 30-day comment period on the Proposed Action Report. The appeal must meet the requirements at 36 CFR 215.14. The Appeal Deciding Officer is the Regional Forester, Intermountain Region. Appeals filed by regular mail or express delivery must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer; Intermountain Regional Office; 324 25th Street; Ogden, UT 84401. Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed.

Appeals may also be hand-delivered to the above address between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals may also be submitted via fax at (801) 625-5277.

Electronic appeals must be submitted in a rich text format (.rtf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) format as an email message to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. E-mailed appeals must include the project name in the subject line. 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 Idaho Statesman,* the newspaper of record, Boise, Idaho. Attachments received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in *The Idaho Statesman*, 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.

To facilitate capturing the value of fire-killed trees before they deteriorate, the Acting Forest Supervisor requested an Emergency Situation Determination for this project which the Chief of the Forest Service granted in April of 2008. Therefore, pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215.10, implementation of this project may proceed immediately after publication of this decision in *The Idaho Statesman*.

For further information, contact Melissa Yenko, Project Leader, Emmett Ranger District, 1805 Highway 16, Emmett, Idaho, 83611; or phone (208) 365-7000.

FRANK V. GUZMAN
Deputy Forest Supervisor
Boise National Forest

06/20/08
Date

ATTACHMENT A

DETAILS OF DECISION
MF PAYETTE SALVAGE PROJECT

Noxious Weeds

NX-1 Avoid or reduce the introduction of weed seeds and propagates by including timber sale contract provisions to ensure appropriate off road equipment is cleaned.

NX-2 Seed mixes used during restoration and soil erosion prevention activities shall be comprised of certified weed free native or desirable nonnative seed mix, as recommended by the botanist.

NX-3 All seed, straw, hay, mulch, erosion cloth, biologs, or other organic matter brought to the project area for land management purposes shall be certified free of noxious weed seed.

Cultural Resources

CR-1 Two historic properties would be avoided and protected during project implementation.

CR-2 Contracts implementing either action alternative would be governed by provisions designed to prevent adverse impacts to any unknown cultural sites discovered during project implementation.

Wildlife

WL-1 Among the fire-killed and imminently dead trees available for salvage harvest within identified units of the Lucky and Lightning fire salvage area, an average of two trees (10-20 inches d.b.h.) and all ponderosa pine greater than 20 inches d.b.h. will be left per acre.

Snags retained to meet prescriptions and wildlife benefits will adhere to the following:

- Only fire-killed trees will count toward the snag retention prescription and not those that were snags prior to the fire.
- Retention will be minimized within 300 feet of roads, because these snags would be more likely to be removed by woodcutters.
- Ponderosa pine will be the preferred leave tree species in the 10 – 20 inches d.b.h size class.
- Snags should be retained in a clumping pattern of 3-6 snags/clump across a unit (i.e. not one large clump of snags).

WL-2 All trees that were dead before the fire will be left standing (C6.411# - Felling and Bucking Special Objectives).

WL-3 If an active goshawk nest is detected before or during implementation, no project-related activities shall occur within 650 feet. (Reynolds, et al., 1992) of the nest tree from March 1 to August 15. However, the wildlife biologist may alter the actual size and shape of the buffer around the nest if conditions (e.g., topography) warrant modifications. Additionally, the wildlife biologist may shorten the activity restriction period if it can be determined through nest monitoring that the nest has failed or the young have fledged and left the area where activities might disturb them.

WL-4 All personnel conducting activities associated with this project (e.g., road decommissioning contracts) shall not be permitted to hunt, transport hunters, discharge firearms, or transport game animals with vehicles in areas otherwise closed to motorized vehicles.

WL-5 Project-related contracts shall include protective measures for Threatened, Endangered, and Region 4 Sensitive species against unforeseen events. Protective measures will account for new species or areas that may be identified during project implementation.

Air Quality

AQ-1 A Burn Boss will monitor the prescribed fire and smoke-related visibility during and after ignition at intervals and intensity appropriate to the existing conditions.

AQ-2 A Prescribed Fire Burn Plan integrating the requirements of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, the Boise NF Fire Management Plan, and Interagency Prescribed Fire Handbook will be prepared.

AQ-3 Caution signs will be placed near projects to advise publics about prescribed burning in the project area.

Timber Harvesting

TH-1 Log haul is prohibited on weekends (all day Saturday and Sunday) and on all major holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after), and the opening day of deer, elk and turkey general hunting seasons.

TH-2 Warning signs will be posted on the main roads to inform the public of logging operations and truck traffic.

TH-3 All stands that are reforested will be evaluated for gopher activity during the year of planting, and 2 successive years. Should the observed activity warrant, treatment shall be applied as follows:

> Gophers are controlled by placing 0.50 percent strychnine oat bait below-ground in gopher burrows. Below-ground application was developed to mitigate bait exposure to nontarget species. Baiting is done manually, using the “probe and bleach bottle” method. Burrows are located using a steel probe, and bait (approximately 1 teaspoon per set) is placed into the runway via the hole produced by insertion of the probe. The breach is closed with a strip of paper tape and covered with soil to reduce the risk of covering the bait while sealing the hole or providing nontarget animals’ access to the bait.
>
> The EPA classified all strychnine products, except for those products containing strychnine at nominal concentrations no greater than 0.5 percent and which are limited by their labels to manual belowground applications, as restricted use in 1978 (US EPA, 1996). It is currently registered for use belowground as a bait application to control pocket gophers (US EPA, 1996).
>
> Expected treatment rates for hand application of strychnine baits are 0.5 to 1.0 lb/ac, which give a range of 1,135 mg to 2,270 mg active ingredient of strychnine applied per acre. The persistence of strychnine treated bait in the environment is relatively short (Case and Jasch 1994, Bonar 1995). Depending on soil moisture and other factors, treated bait placed below ground is effective for 1 week to 1.5 months, (Black, 1994). Bait can quickly become moldy, damp, rancid, or otherwise inedible. In this condition, it is readily rejected by pocket gophers (Engeman and Witmer, 2000).

TH-4 To provide for safe winter recreation opportunities, winter logging activities would be prohibited from December 1 to April 15, unless this timeframe is altered by the District Ranger based on weather conditions.

TH-5 No salvage harvest activities would occur within Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs), except identified hazard tree removal.

TH-6 Slash treatment would occur by the following methods:

Off-Road Jammer/Tractor Units: Lop and leave onsite activity slash on all high intensity burned units and whole tree yard with the requirement to haul slash back to the skid trails within the treatment area on moderate intensity burned units.

Helicopter Units: Slash would be piled and burned on landings.

Road Management

RM-1 Road decommissioning activities would include some or all of the following activities: (1) block access at all points from exiting roads using berms, boulders, and/or recontouring, (2) remove culverts and stabilize crossings, (3) scarify and seed/mulch all disturbed areas with approved seed mix (see NX-2), and (4) maintain erosion control devices during all road decommissioning activities adjacent to streams (see SW-9). Decommissioned roads will be removed from the Forest transportation system. Culverts may be left if interdisciplinary team analysis determines that risks and consequences outweigh the benefits of removing the culvert.

RM-2 Road closures including year-round and seasonal restrictions and would be achieved through use of physical barriers including but not limited to gates, berms, and/or boulders.

Recreation

RE-1 Following conversion of the 1.2 miles of NFS road 668B to non-motorized trail, the trail will be signed at identified locations (including its junction with the motorized Airline Trail #038), to facilitate trail use understanding and reduce potential conflict between motorized and nonmotorized users.

Soil, Water and Fisheries

SW-1 The Forest Service will approve skid trails in all units proposed for ground based skidding.

SW-2 The following riparian conservation areas (RCAs) are applicable to all management activities.

Perennial Streams and intermittent streams providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat: The RCA will be the flood-prone width or two site-potential tree heights, whichever is greatest.

Intermittent streams not providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat: The RCA will be the flood-prone width or one site-potential tree height, whichever is greatest.

Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs, and Wetlands: The RCA will be the outer edge of seasonally saturated soils, the outer edge of riparian vegetation, or one site-potential tree height, whichever is greatest.

Water Source	RCA Distance*
Perennial Stream	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)
Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs, and Wetlands	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)

* RCA distance based on PVG 2.

SW-3 Currently no log landings for ground-based harvest are planned to occur within RCAs. However, local topography may offer no other alternative than to build log landings within RCAs. It is estimated that for approximately every 8 acres of ground-based harvest, one landing (approximately 50 feet x 50 feet) would be needed to facilitate harvest (Thompson and VanZile, 2008, pers comm.). The landings would consist of approximately 50 percent road. Equipment will work from road and deck logs on the other 50 percent of the landing. It is not possible to estimate the number of log landings within RCAs; however, that number is expected to be minimal. If landings within RCAs are necessary, the following actions would occur:

- Any proposed landings within RCAs would be approved by a Forest Service hydrologist prior to construction.
- No landings would occur within one site-potential tree height of project area streams unless there is no other option.
- A slash filter windrow would be constructed between the landing and the stream. The slash windrow would be constructed to be no more than 2 meters wide and 1 meter high and material must be compacted and have contact with the ground in order to capture and store sediment. Construction and placement of the slash filter windrow would occur at the same time as the landing construction. Slash filter windrows would be left in place. Excess slash would be piled on or above the road for subsequent burning.

SW-4 In order to comply with Forest Plan Standard SWST08, all culvert replacements completed as part of project activities would provide fish passage on existing and potential fish-bearing streams. Acceptable ratings for gradient, water flow velocity, jump/drop height, and other parameters will be based on the best scientific data available.

SW-5 In order to comply with Forest Plan Standard FRST02, all culvert replacements completed as part of project activities would be designed to accommodate a 100-year flood recurrence interval.

SW-6 If water drafting is necessary, the locations, methods, and timing shall be approved in advance by a District fisheries biologist or hydrologist. Screen opening size must be the standard 3/32 inch or smaller, and screen surface area must be proportional to the pump intake rate to ensure that water velocity through the screen does not exceed 0.4 fps.

SW-7 An emergency spill containment kit shall be available onsite as mentioned in the Spill Prevention and Containment Plan. No fuels shall be stored in RCAs. Refueling or servicing of vehicles or equipment shall not take place in RCAs, unless there is no other alternative. All equipment shall be in good repair and free of leakage of lubricants, fuels, coolants, and hydraulic fluid.

SW-8 Helicopter landings would be constructed outside of RCAs.

SW-9 Disturbed areas would be seeded with an approved seed mixture (NX-2) after September 1.

SW-10 Erosion control devices, such as certified weed free straw waddles or straw bales, and erosion cloth will be maintained during all road decommissioning adjacent to streams to prevent delivery of sediment. Natural materials would be allowed to deteriorate in place. Silt fences, if used, would be removed 1 year after completion of the road-related activities.

SW-11 Removal/replacement of culverts would take place after spring peak flow.

SW-12 Sedimats may be placed downstream from culvert removals to minimize sediment delivery to the receiving waterbody. These would be removed from the channel at the conclusion of activities and may be placed on the streambanks for stabilization, if necessary for rehabilitation. Other sediment control measures may include silt fences, erosion control matting, mulch, straw wattles or bales, or slash.

SW-13 Skid trails would have cross-ditches constructed at intervals of approximately 20 feet where skid trails exceed 20 percent slope. Where logs are available immediately adjacent to the skid trails, logs 6 inches in diameter or greater would be placed against the ground surface and diagonal to the skid trails at 20-foot intervals instead of cross-ditches being constructed. Cross-ditching and/or placement of logs on skid trails would occur prior to equipment moving to the next harvest unit.

SW-14 The timber layout and engineering personnel will be trained to identify landslide-prone areas in the field and will be provided with a map of potential areas as modeled by SINMAP. If the crews identify moderate- or high-landslide-prone areas, a hydrologist or soil scientist will provide guidance for the appropriate level of avoidance and landslide prevention (Forest Plan, Appendix B, p. B45-B47). (See the following Landslide Prone Checklist.)

Identification and Management of Landslide Prone (LSP) Areas

Field reconnaissance will be used to identify LSP areas during road location and timber sale preparation. The following checklist will help field personnel identify potential LSP areas. If LSP areas are identified during fieldwork, effects to LSP areas will be mitigated by avoidance and/or prevention of landslides by limiting and/or restricting practices:

Landslide Prone (LSP) Checklist

Landslide prone areas may be identified by any of the following indicators:

On Slopes of:	Look For:
All Slopes	Existing slides or slumps
	Rotational slumps can be identified sometimes as ½ acre – 1 acre (or greater) flat areas immediately below steep slopes
	Escarpments with visible bare soils
	Roadways with drainage problems, fill failures, severe rilling, etc.
>50%	Moist sites as indicated by vegetation or actual seeps/springs (especially at the head of draws)
	Surface erosion features (rills and gullies). Look below these sites for accumulations areas (draws) that may collect water and produce a failure.
	Soil accumulations areas below rock outcrop zones.
	Concave hollows
	Jackstrawed and leaning trees are better indicators of LSP areas than pistol-butted trees.
	Bare soil areas caused by intense fires or recent timber harvest or road building that could increase surface runoff to an unstable slope.
>70%	All wet or dry sites on these steep slopes should warrant a close inspection of potential LSP, especially at the heads of draws or where overburden exists.

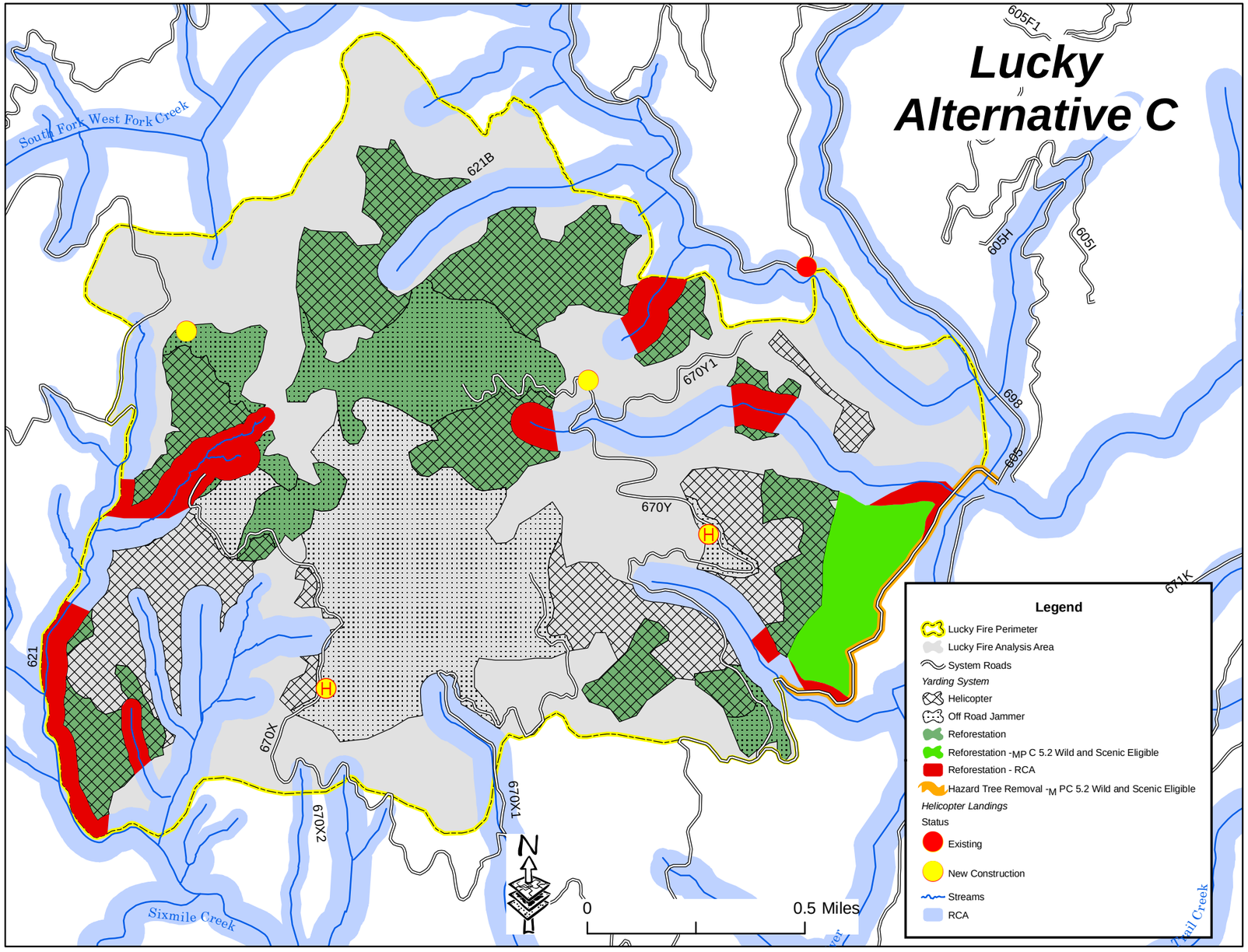

Figure DN-1. Lucky Fire Alternative C Map.

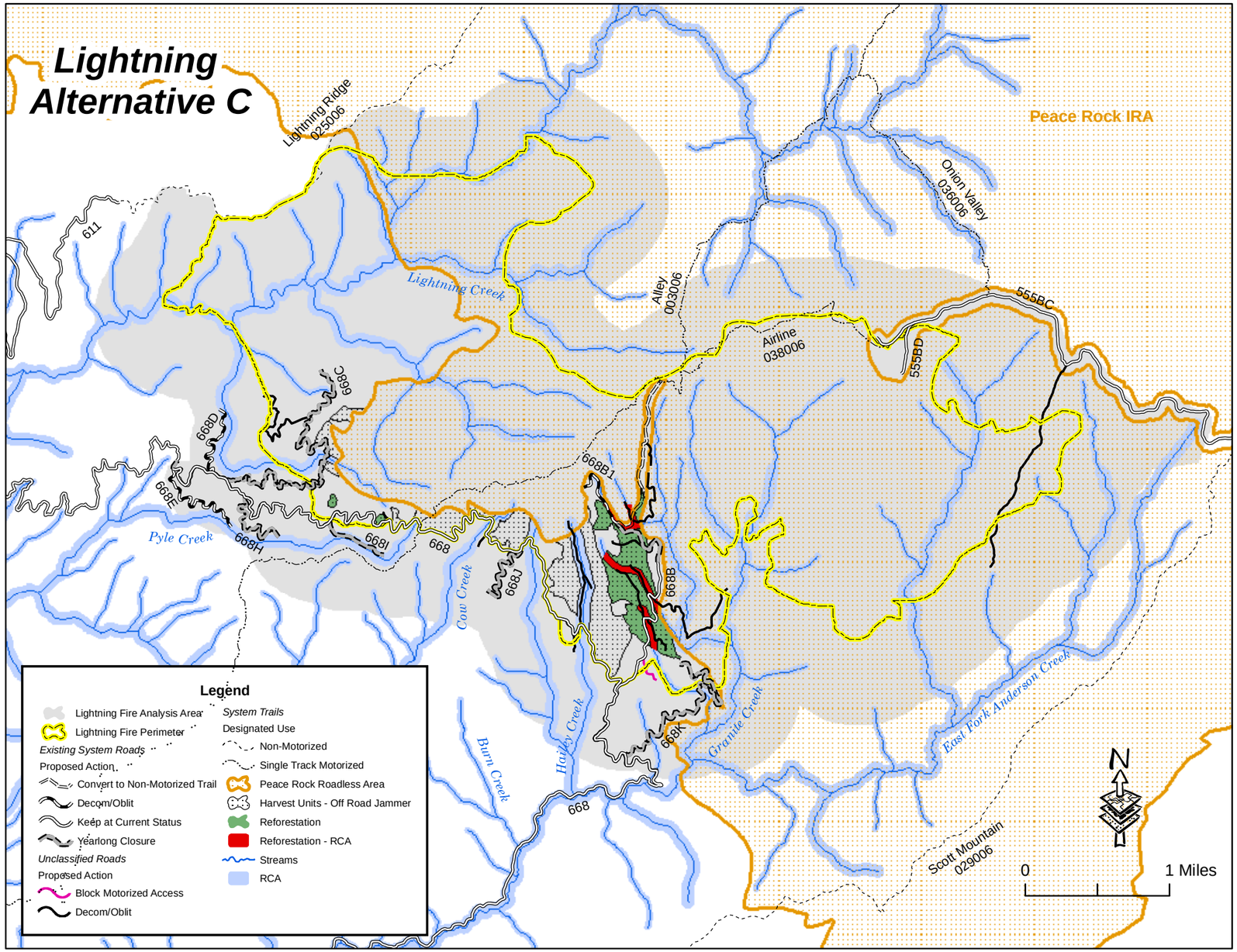

Figure DN-2. Lightning Fire Alternative C

ATTACHMENT B

MONITORING PLAN
MF PAYETTE SALVAGE PROJECT

The following monitoring will occur with implementation of Alternative C.

Timber Sale Layout

Objective: The intent of this monitoring is to ensure that resource concerns including wildlife species and landslide prone areas are identified and proper protective/avoidance measures are implemented for landslide prevention.

- The timber marking crew is responsible for notifying the District Wildlife Biologist and implementing the protective measures defined by the Wildlife Biologist, if an active goshawk nest or other Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or Region 4 sensitive species is identified in the project area during salvage harvest operations (Design Feature WL-3 and WL-5).
- The timber layout and engineering personnel will be trained to identify landslide-prone areas in the field and will be provided with a map of potential areas as modeled by SINMAP. If the crews identify moderate- or high-landslide-prone areas, a hydrologist or soil scientist will provide guidance for the appropriate level of avoidance and landslide prevention (Design Feature SW-14) (Forest Plan, Appendix B, p. B45-B47).

Timber Harvest Administration/Monitoring

Objectives – Monitor timber harvest, slash disposal, road maintenance, and erosion control activities associated with the timber sale. The intent of the monitoring will be to assure implementation of identified protective measures and implementation of those measures during salvage harvest implementation.

The Sale Administrator or his representative will be responsible for implementation of the following design features:

- Implementation of pertinent Rules and Regulations of the Idaho Forest Practices Act.
- The Sale Administrator is responsible to avoid or reduce the introduction of weed seeds and propagates by ensuring that all off road equipment is cleaned prior to entering the Boise National Forest lands (Design Feature NX-1).
- Ensuring that seed mixes, straw, hay, mulch, erosion cloth, biologs or other organic matter used during restoration and soil erosion prevention activities are comprised of certified noxious weed free. Seed mixes shall be certified weed-free native or desirable nonnative seeds, as recommended by the botanist (Design Feature NX-2 and NX-3).
- Protect of two known historic properties and any unknown cultural site discovered during project implementation (Design Feature CR-1 and CR-2).
- Implement the snag retention prescription in the Lucky and Lightning fire salvage areas to retain an average of two trees 10-20 inches d.b.h. and all ponderosa pine greater than 20 inches d.b.h. will be left per acre (Design Feature WL-1). Snags retained to meet prescriptions and wildlife benefits will adhere to the following:
    - Only fire-killed trees will count toward the snag retention prescription and not those that were snags prior to the fire.
    - Retention will be minimized within 300 feet of roads, because these snags would be more likely to be removed by woodcutters.

  - Ponderosa pine will be the preferred leave tree species in the 10 – 20 inches d.b.h size class.

  - Snags should be retained in a clumping pattern of 3-6 snags/clump across a unit (i.e. not one large clump of snags).

- The Sale Administrator is responsible to ensuring that all trees that were dead before the fire be left standing (C6.411# - Felling and Bucking Special Objectives) (Design Feature WL-2).
- The Sale Administrator is responsible for notifying the District Wildlife Biologist and implementing the protective measures defined by the Wildlife Biologist, if an active goshawk nest or other Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or Region 4 sensitive species is identified in the project area during salvage harvest operations (Design Feature WL-3 and WL-5).
- Ensuring that all personnel conducting activities associated with this project are not hunting, transporting hunters, discharging firearms, or transporting game animals with vehicles in areas otherwise closed to motorized vehicles (Design Feature WL-4).
- Ensuring log haul is prohibited on weekends (all day Saturday and Sunday) and on all major holidays (Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after), and the opening day of deer, elk and turkey general hunting seasons (Design Feature TH-1).
- Ensuring that warning signs are posted on the main roads to inform the public of logging operations and truck traffic (Design Feature TH-2)
- Ensuring no winter logging occurs between December 1 and April 15, unless this timeframe is altered by the District Ranger based on weather conditions (Design Feature TH-4).
- Implementation of slash treatment (Design Feature TH-6). Slash treatment would occur by the following methods:

  - Off-Road Jammer/Tractor Units: Lop and leave onsite activity slash on all high intensity burned units and whole tree yard with the requirement to haul slash back to the skid trails within the treatment area on moderate intensity burned units.

  - Helicopter Units: Slash would be piled and burned on landings.

- The Sale administrator will be responsible for approving all ground based skid trails prior to initiation of harvest activities in each unit (Design Feature SW-1).
- The Sale Administrator will be responsible for prohibiting salvage harvest activities, including construction of helicopter landing and skid trails, within RCAs (Design Feature SW-8 and TH-5). The following riparian conservation areas (RCAs) are applicable to all management activities (Design Feature SW-2).

  Perennial Streams and intermittent streams providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat: The RCA will be the flood-prone width or two site-potential tree heights, whichever is greatest.

  Intermittent streams not providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat: The RCA will be the flood-prone width or one site-potential tree height, whichever is greatest.

  Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs, and Wetlands: The RCA will be the outer edge of seasonally saturated soils, the outer edge of riparian vegetation, or one site-potential tree height, whichever is greatest.

Water Source	RCA Distance*
Perennial Stream	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream providing seasonal rearing and spawning habitat	240-foot slope distance (two site-potential tree heights)
Intermittent Stream	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)
Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs, and Wetlands	120-foot slope distance (one site-potential tree height)

* RCA distance based on Potential Vegetation Group (PVG) 2.

- The Sale administrator will be responsible for the ensuring the completion following actions if construction of a landing to facilitate ground-based harvest within an RCA is necessary to facilitate harvest activities (Design Feature SW-3)
    - Any proposed landings within RCAs would be approved by a Forest Service hydrologist prior to construction.
    - No landings would occur within one site-potential tree height of project area streams unless there is no other option.
    - A slash filter windrow would be constructed between the landing and the stream. The slash windrow would be constructed to be no more than 2 meters wide and 1 meter high and material must be compacted and have contact with the ground in order to capture and store sediment. Construction and placement of the slash filter windrow would occur at the same time as the landing construction. Slash filter windrows would be left in place. Excess slash would be piled on or above the road for subsequent burning.
- Ensuring that refueling of equipment occurs outside of RCAs and designating petroleum product storage locations outside of RCAs ensuring that proper spill containment is in place. In addition, a spill containment kit will be onsite as defined in the Spill Prevention and Containment Plan (Design Feature SW-7).
- The Sale Administrator is responsible to ensure that all equipment is in good repair and free of leakage of lubricant, fuels, coolant, and hydraulic fluid (Design Feature SW-7).
- In coordination with the District Hydrologist and/or Fisheries Biologist, the Sale Administrator will identify acceptable water drafting sites and ensure that pump screen opening size is 3/32 inch or smaller, and the screen surface area is proportional to the pump intake rate to ensure that water velocity through the screen does not exceed 0.4 fps (Design Feature SW-6).
- Seeding of disturbed areas with approved seed mix after September 1 (Design Feature SW-9)
- The Sale Administrator will ensure that culvert replacement and/or replacements occur after spring peak flow (Design Feature SW-11).
- Installation of cross-ditches or log placement on all skid trails in a unit prior to the Purchaser moving on to the next unit. Skid trails would have cross-ditches constructed at intervals of approximately 20 feet where skid trails exceed 20 percent slope. Where logs are available immediately adjacent to the skid trails, logs 6 inches in diameter or greater would be placed against the ground surface and diagonal to the skid trails at 20-foot intervals instead of cross-ditches being constructed (Design Feature SW-13).

Slash Disposal

Objectives – Assure that prescribed burning of slash is accomplished in a safe manner in compliance with smoke management policy.

During implementation of this portion of the decision, the burn boss will assure that the following is accomplished:

- Implement a site specific approved burn plan addressing a Burn Boss will monitor the prescribed fire and smoke-related visibility during and after ignition at intervals and intensity appropriate to the existing conditions (Design Feature AQ-1).
- Air Quality: A Prescribed Fire Burn Plan integrating the requirements of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, the Boise NF Fire Management Plan, and Interagency Prescribed Fire Handbook will be prepared (Design Feature AQ-2).
- Safety: Caution signs will be placed near projects to advise publics about prescribed burning in the project area (Design Feature AQ-3).

Road Management

Objectives – To assure that road decommissioning activities and road closures are effective and completed in a way to minimize effects to other resources

During implementation of this portion of the decision, the District Hydrologist/Engineer and/or their representative will assure that:

- Road decommissioning activities are completed using some or all of the following activities: (1) block access at all points from exiting roads using berms, boulders, and/or recontouring, (2) remove culverts and stabilize crossings, (3) scarify and seed/mulch all disturbed areas with approved seed mix and (4) maintain erosion control devices during all road decommissioning activities adjacent to streams (see SW-9). Decommissioned roads will be removed from the Forest transportation system. Culverts may be left if interdisciplinary team analysis determines that risks and consequences outweigh the benefits of removing the culvert (Design Feature RM-1).

- Road closures including year-round and seasonal restrictions are achieved through use of physical barriers including but not limited to gates, berms, and/or boulders (Design Feature RM-2).

- Ensuring that erosion control devices, such as certified weed free straw waddles or straw bales, and erosion cloth will be maintained during all road decommissioning adjacent to streams to prevent delivery of sediment. Natural materials would be allowed to deteriorate in place. Silt fences, if used, would be removed 1 year after completion of the road-related activities (Design Feature SW-10).

Recreation

Objective **–** To assure that the conversion of 1.2 miles of road to non-motorized is effective and reduces conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized users.

During implementation of this portion of the decision, the recreation program manager and/or his representative will assure that:

- Following conversion of the 1.2 miles of NFS road 668B to non-motorized trail, the trail will be signed at identified locations (including its junction with the motorized Airline trail #038), to facilitate trail user understanding and reduce potential conflict between motorized and non-motorized users (Design Feature RF-1).

Reforestation

Objective – To assure that gopher control activities associated with reforestation does complies with EPA requirements to avoid impacts to non-target animals.

During implementation of this portion of the decision, the Silviculturist and/or his representative will:

- Evaluate all stands that are reforested for gopher activity during the year of planting, and 2 successive years (Design Feature TH-3). Should the observed activity warrant, treatment shall be applied as follows:

  Gophers are controlled by placing 0.50 percent strychnine oat bait below-ground in gopher burrows. Below-ground application was developed to mitigate bait exposure to nontarget species. Baiting is done manually, using the "probe and bleach bottle" method. Burrows are located using a steel probe, and bait (approximately 1 teaspoon per set) is placed into the runway via the hole produced by insertion of the probe. The breach is closed with a strip of paper tape and covered with soil to reduce the risk of covering the bait while sealing the hole or providing nontarget animals' access to the bait.

  The EPA classified all strychnine products, except for those products containing strychnine at nominal concentrations no greater than 0.5 percent and which are limited by their labels to manual belowground applications, as restricted use in 1978 (US EPA, 1996). It is currently registered for use belowground as a bait application to control pocket gophers (US EPA, 1996).

  Expected treatment rates for hand application of strychnine baits are 0.5 to 1.0 lb/ac, which give a range of 1,135 mg to 2,270 mg active ingredient of strychnine applied per acre. The persistence of strychnine treated bait in the environment is relatively short (Case and Jasch 1994, Bonar 1995). Depending on soil moisture and other factors, treated bait placed below ground is effective for 1 week to 1.5 months, (Black, 1994). Bait can quickly become moldy, damp, rancid, or otherwise inedible. In this condition, it is readily rejected by pocket gophers (Engeman and Witmer, 2000).

Watershed Restoration

Objective: The intent of this monitoring is to ensure implementation of design features related to watershed restoration activities, i.e. road closures, road decommissioning, and conversion of road to trail.

The Forest Service Hydrologist/Engineer and/or his/her representative will conduct the following monitoring during watershed restoration activity implementation:

- Implementation of pertinent Rules and Regulations of the Idaho Forest Practices Act.
- The Forest Service Hydrologist/Engineer is responsible to avoid or reduce the introduction of weed seeds and propagates by ensuring that all off road equipment is cleaned prior to entering Boise NF lands (Design Feature NX-1).
- Ensuring that seed mixes, straw, hay, mulch, erosion cloth, biologs or other organic matter used during restoration and soil erosion prevention activities are comprised of certified noxious weed free. Seed mixes shall be certified weed-free native or desirable nonnative seeds, as recommended by the botanist (Design Feature NX-2 and NX-3).
- Protect of two known historic properties and any unknown cultural site discovered during project implementation (Design Feature CR-1 and CR-2).
- Ensuring that all personnel conducting activities associated with this project are not hunting, transporting hunters, discharging firearms, or transporting game animals with vehicles in areas otherwise closed to motorized vehicles (Design Feature WL-4).

- The Forest Service Hydrologist/Engineer is responsible for notifying the District Wildlife Biologist and implementing the protective measures defined by the Wildlife Biologist, if an active goshawk nest or other Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or Region 4 sensitive species is identified in the project area during salvage harvest operations (Design Feature WL-3 and WL-5).
- The Forest Service Hydrologist/Engineer will ensure that culvert replacement and/or replacements occur after spring peak flow (Design Feature SW-11).
- Ensuring that erosion control devices, such as certified weed free straw waddles or straw bales, and erosion cloth will be maintained during all road decommissioning adjacent to streams to prevent delivery of sediment. Natural materials would be allowed to deteriorate in place. Silt fences, if used, would be removed 1 year after completion of the road-related activities (Design Feature SW-10).
- Placement of sedimats downstream from culvert removals to minimize sediment delivery to the receiving waterbody. These would be removed from the channel at the conclusion of activities and may be placed on the streambanks for stabilization, if necessary for rehabilitation. Other sediment control measures may include silt fences, erosion control matting, mulch, straw wattles or bales, or slash (Design Feature SW-12).
- Ensuring that refueling of equipment occurs outside of RCAs and designating petroleum product storage locations outside of RCAs ensuring that proper spill containment is in place. In addition, a spill containment kit will be onsite as defined in the Spill Prevention and Containment Plan (Design Feature SW-7).
- The Forest Hydrologist/Engineer is responsible to ensure that all equipment is in good repair and free of leakage of lubricant, fuels, coolant, and hydraulic fluid (Design Feature SW-7).