

REPLY TO GPNF REQUEST ON FUELWOOD PROGRAM AND RELATED NEPA

March 1, 2011

This report details the fuelwood program and associated NEPA on the Mt. Adams Ranger District and the Mt. St Helens NVM. The programs are identical. Staffs who implement the programs have shared responsibilities on both units.

Fuelwood Needs

There has not been a recent assessment of fuelwood needs on these management units. For fuelwood collected for personal use, demand is a function of the wood quality (species and soundness), the ease of getting it into the truck (cutting difficulties and carry distance), and hauling distance. Demand always exceeds availability for a large diameter, sound Douglas-fir log that is on a road and designated as fuelwood. By contrast, a grand fir log can lie on the edge of a road for years, especially if it's far away and less than a truck load. Demand is also greater for fuelwood that can be found with certainty.

Cutting Areas

Personal Use: Free

Fuelwood to be used on-Forest (e.g. campfires) does not require a permit or fee. Generally any downed wood may be cut and collected for this use. This fuelwood may even be transported within the Forest.

Yakama Indians are allowed to remove fuelwood off the National Forest without fee or permit. Fuelwood is considered a traditional and accustomed use. We request that the YIN tribal members follow our permitted guidelines for fuelwood designation.

Personal Use: Permit

Personal use fuelwood may be collected and removed from National Forest under permit.

- *Cost:* \$20 from FS office: \$21 from private vendors
- *Quantity:* 4 cords
- *Season:* Permit good for calendar year, January 1 to December 31.
- *Conditions:* Fuelwood may be gathered where designated and subject to fire precaution restrictions. Off-road travel is not permitted. See permit condition and attachments:
O:\NFS\GiffordPinchot\Program\VegetationMgmt\SaleAdmin-2430-4\presale\misc_products\Firewood\2011\Firewood Permit Info
- *Fuelwood Designations:*
 - **Designation by Description.** Down wood on open, system roads may be collected. These trees do not have to be designated with paint. This wood must lie between the roadside ditches on gentle terrain (referred to as "ditchline to ditchline") or within the road prism (includes cut slope and fill slope) on steeper terrain.
 - **Individual Trees Designated by Paint:** These are scattered downed trees adjacent to roads but outside of the ditchlines or road prism. These trees may have fallen naturally or were felled hazard trees. These trees would also be outside of withdrawn areas (i.e. Wilderness) or riparian

areas. They could be in LSR's if in excess of downed log needs. Forest Service staff paints these trees with yellow tracer paint.

- **Designated Areas:** These areas are cull and slash decks from timber sale units that have been released, road segments with an abundance of adjacent downed wood from either windfall or hazard tree felling, or road segments through pre-commercial thinning stands. Designated areas are signed at entrance and exits and may have additional information posted such as allowable collection distance from road or closure date. MTA provides maps of the designated areas. MSH provides information in the office on designated areas and concentrations of individual trees designated by paint or in the road.

Commercial Use: Timber Sale Contract

Fuelwood may also be removed via timber sale contract. These have been comprised of individual downed trees of significant value, blowdown patches, fireline salvage, standing hazard trees near roads and campgrounds, and standing green trees in small (e.g. 1-2 acre) harvest units.

NEPA Documents

Personal Use Collection

Fuelwood collection for personal use has been covered by a menagerie of NEPA documents. A synopsis follows:

- 1992 – Decision Notice / FONSI for Firewood Program on Mt. Adams Ranger District and Wind River Ranger District. Established personal and commercial use within designated zones.
- 1995 – Biological Evaluation. Expanded personal use collection to the road prism of open system roads across the newly combined Mt. Adams Ranger District.
- 2003 and 2004 – Decision Memo for Hazard Tree Removal in Administrative Sites, Recreation Sites and Along Forest Roads, Mt. Adams Ranger District. Approved hazard tree felling and the selective removal of downed trees for commercial or free use firewood. Does not cover removal of hazard trees through commercial timber sale or salvage sale.
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- 2009 – Decision Memo for Young Stand Thinning and Bough Removal Projects, Mt. Adams RD and Mount St. Helen NVM. Allows free use and personal use fuelwood removal of tree boles that were felled in the young stand thinning.
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O:\NFS\GiffordPinchot\Project\szTSI2009\FinalNEPADocument\TSI-bough_dm_MSH.doc
- 2010 – Decision Memo for Road 8040 Hazard Tree Felling. Approved hazard tree felling and removal of downed trees for free use and personal use firewood.
<O:\NFS\GiffordPinchot\Project\szAllProjectsNEPAComplete\8040 Hazard Trees>
- Designated areas of slash and cull piles at timber sale landings tier to the NEPA for the respective timber sale.

The current personal use fuelwood program is consistent with these previous decisions. Annual review and scoping of the program should occur periodically. No decision documentation is required for the excluded category of 36 CFR 220.6(d)(8) approval, modification, or continuation of minor, short-term (1

year or less) special uses of National Forest System land (examples include (iii.) approving the gathering of forest products for personal use).

Commercial Use Fuelwood under a Timber Sale Contract

These projects typically are authorized by a unique NEPA document. In most cases these actions are categorical exclusions with a decision memo or letter to the file.