

Output 1: Pre-treatment Checklist

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| Focus Area: North Fork Focus Area | | District: Laramie Ranger District |
| Partnership Project: Yes | | Partner(s): Snowy Range Ski Area, Wyoming State Forestry Division, Wyoming Game and Fish Department |
| Accounting Unit: North Corner | | Accounting Unit: Choose an item. |
| Objective(s): Projects in the North Fork focus area will meet all seven of objectives of the LaVA project: #1 mitigate hazardous fuels; #2 provide for recovery of forest products; #3 enhance forest and rangeland resiliency to future insect and disease infestations; #4 protect infrastructure and municipal water supplies; #5 restore wildlife habitat; #6 enhance access for forest visitors and permittees; and #7 provide for human safety | | |
| Location Description: This focus area is located about one to ten miles north and west of Centennial, extending from the Forest boundary west along Highway 130 to the intersection with National Forest System Road 346 (Sugarloaf Road) and north along NFSR 101 (Sand Lake Road) to the watershed divide between the Little Laramie River and Rock Creek. | | |
| Legal Location: This focus area is located primarily in Township 16 North, Range 78 West, 6 th Principal Meridian, Albany County, Wyoming. It extends west into portions of Township 16 North, Range 79 West, and north into a small part of Township 17 North, Range 78 West. | | |
| Management Areas: This focus area includes the following Forest Plan Management Areas: 2.2 (Research Natural Areas), 4.2 (Scenery), 4.3 (Dispersed Recreation), 5.13 (Forest Products), 5.15 (Forest Products, Ecological Maintenance, and Restoration Considering the Historic Range of Variability), 8.21 (Developed Recreation), 8.22 (Ski-based Resorts, Existing and Potential), and 8.6 (Administrative Sites). | | |
| Treatment Opportunity Areas: This focus area includes the following Treatment Opportunity Areas (TOAs): Forest and Rangeland Resiliency and Forest Products, Recreation Emphasis, Scenery and Aspen Emphasis, and Special Emphasis. This focus area also includes large areas of the overlapping Fuels Treatment and Safety Emphasis TOA. | | |
| Pinyon Data Location(s): https://usfs.box.com/s/b9ekiz7ooxpkn7ygyagt00y2digh8ap | | |
| GIS Data Location(s): T:\FS\NFS\MBRTB\Project\LaVA_Implementation\GIS\NorthFork\Data | | |

Description of Preliminary Treatments (narrative):

Three categories of preliminary treatments have been identified in the North Fork Focus Area: forest products, fuel treatments, and recreation / special uses. No projects with a primary focus of wildlife habitat improvement have been identified. Opportunities for wet meadow restoration or other low-tech process-based restoration exist but have not yet been developed.

Many of the preliminary treatment areas have not been reviewed in detail on the ground and are likely to change based on site-specific resource surveys, application of the design features and standard operating procedures identified in Appendix A, public and Cooperator feedback, and other factors.

Several areas of potential cross-boundary treatments have been identified. The partners, other state and federal agencies, or private landowners will develop and implement these treatments, which are outside of the LaVA analysis but complementary to LaVA objectives (for example, aspen enhancement or fuels reduction). Depending on the implementation tool, some LaVA and cross-boundary treatments could be combined (for example, in a Good Neighbor Authority [GNA] agreement) for efficiency.

Forest Products

Preliminary treatment areas for three timber sales have been identified in the focus area: Coal Timber Sale (TS), Hopper TS, and Pumice TS. All three projects are scheduled for implementation in 2025. The Sand Lake Road (NFSR 101) and Fallen Pines Road (NFSR 329) provides the primary access for these timber sales. These roads provide good opportunities for winter logging operations. The Sand Lake Road is an ungroomed snowmobile trail.

The Coal TS is located along the eastern edge of the focus area about three to four miles north of Centennial. It will also extend into the Fallen Pines focus area. Treatment areas are generally located along NFSRs 398 and 398.C. The Coal TS will cover an estimated 197 acres in the North Fork focus area and 158 acres in the Fallen Pines focus area.

The Hopper TS is located in the center of the focus area about three to seven miles north and northwest of Centennial. Treatment areas are generally located along NFSRs 101, 320, 329, and 330. The Hopper TS will cover an estimated 567 acres in the North Fork focus area and includes about three acres in the Fallen Pines focus area.

The Pumice TS is located primarily in the Fallen Pines focus area about five to eight miles north of Centennial. It will cover an estimated 299 acres in the Fallen Pines focus area but includes three acres in the North Fork focus area off NFSR 329.A.

Fuel Treatments

Preliminary treatment areas for three fuel treatment projects have been identified in the focus area: Brooklyn Lake Fuels, Centennial Fuels, and North Fork Fuels. Implementation of these projects will start in 2026 at the earliest. Fuel treatments were developed to decrease risk to property and infrastructure, as well as increasing defensibility of Potential Operational Delineation (POD) lines. In the North Fork focus area, Highway 130, Sand Lake Road (NFSR 101), Brooklyn Lake Road (NFSR 317), Fallen Pines Road (NFSR 329), Ehlin Road (NFSR 338), and Barber Lake Road (NFSR 351) are all POD lines.

The Brooklyn Lake Fuels project was identified to reduce the risk of wildfire to recreation residences and other infrastructure. Some treatments have been implemented in the past. This project will remove dead spruce and other dead vegetation from about 119 acres along NFSR 317 and around Brooklyn Lake. Treatment will be followed by piling and burning to further reduce fuels. Live trees will generally remain after treatment unless they pose a threat to public health and safety. Additional field validation is needed to better define the project and plan treatments that avoid unacceptable adverse effects to scenic resources and recreation facilities.

The Centennial Fuel project was identified to reduce the risk of wildfire to recreation residences and other infrastructure, as well as private property east (downwind) of the Forest boundary. This project will thin existing vegetation, focusing on dead trees, on about 375 acres along Wyoming State Highway 130 between the Forest boundary and Corner Mountain trailhead, as well as south along NFSR 338 (Ehlin Road) past the Centennial Work Center and up NFSR 351 (Barber Lake Road) toward Barber Lake. Treatment will be followed by piling and burning to further reduce fuels. The Wyoming State Forestry Division has indicated interest in implementing this project through their Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Additional field validation is needed to better define this project and plan treatments that avoid unacceptable adverse effects to scenic resources and recreation facilities.

The North Fork Fuels project includes a buffer of up to 800 feet from NFSR 329 (Fallen Pines Road) connecting NFSR 101 (Sand Lake Road) with equivalent treatments in the Fallen Pines focus area. In some sections of this road, planned timber sales will meet fuels objectives. In other sections, thinning to meet fuel objectives will be planned. Thinning will be followed by piling and burning to further reduce fuels. This project will cover an estimated 219 acres. Additional field validation is needed to better define this project and plan treatments.

Recreation / Special Uses

Barber Lake and associated facilities: The Forest Service and its partners have a continued interest in maintenance and improvement of recreation facilities along NFSR 351 in the Barber Lake area. One project under discussion is improvement to Barber Lake so that it will hold water throughout the summer. Past attempts to achieve this result have not been successful; however, new techniques may be available. Barber Lake presents one of the only accessible fishing experiences in the area and is very popular when it is full and stocked (for example, during the summer of 2023). Additional discussion and analysis are needed to better define potential projects in this area.

The Snowy Range Ski Area is located in the North Fork focus area. A wildfire could cause substantial damage to infrastructure and vegetation. The Forest Service and ski area owners have had initial discussions about reducing this risk. Planning and implementation will be challenging because of the special use permit for the ski area, scenic resources, and other factors. Additional discussion and analysis are needed to better define potential projects in this area.

Winter parking along Highway 130 has been a challenging issue for many years. Opportunities could exist with planned fuels and forest products projects to begin to address this issue; however, no solutions have yet been defined. Additional discussion and analysis are needed to better define potential solutions.

For all “yes” answers below provide documentation on the next page.

| YES | NO | Issue: |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments have the potential to affect long-term stream health. (If yes, go to Decision Trigger 1). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments are designed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat. (If yes, go to Decision Trigger 2). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments have the potential to alter wildlife security areas. (If yes, go to Decision Trigger 3). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments are located in a Lynx Analysis Unit or Linkage Corridor. (If yes, go to Decision Triggers 4 thru 9). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments will use temporary roads. (If yes, go to Decision Trigger 10 and 11). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments have the potential to affect public access. (If yes, go to Decision Triggers 13 and 14). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The proposed treatments were brought forward or is primarily funded through a partnership source. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do any “yes” answers above result in a Yellow-Light Trigger? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do any “yes” answers above result in a Red-Light Trigger? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Is it likely that the proposed treatments will deviate from any Forest Plan Guideline? (If yes, elaborate on the next page) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Will the proposed treatments affect the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail or a Wild and Scenic River? (If yes, describe length of trail/river affected, type of effects, and duration of effects on next page). |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Based on the proposed treatments, further Design Features are anticipated (If yes, elaborate on next page). |

Describe any Issues or Triggers from Page 4:

Following is an assessment of the preliminary treatments in relation to the Appendix A triggers. The analysis will be updated prior to completion of Implementation Checklists, once the treatment units are field validated.

Trigger 1

Pre-project Equivalent Clearcut Area (ECA) in Hydrologic Unit Code level 7 (HUC7) watersheds in the focus area ranges from 1.0% to 3.7%, under the 25% threshold for a yellow-light trigger. The table below shows the existing condition, area available for treatment, and preliminary treatment areas for all HUC7 watersheds in the focus area.

| Watershed Name | HUC7 | Cumulative ECA (% of NFS lands) | Available under Yellow-Light Trigger (ECA acres) | Preliminary Treatment Area (ECA acres) ¹ |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Upper North Fk Little Laramie Rvr | 10180010060301 | 3.5% | 3,394 | 987 |
| Libby Ck | 10180010060302 | 1.0% | 2,885 | 48 |
| North Fk Little Laramie Rvr | 10180010060303 | 3.7% | No CWE Concerns | 45 |
| Kelly Ck | 10180010060304 | 1.0% | 629 | 77 |

¹ Includes projects being planned and implemented in the Fallen Pines focus area.

Most of the preliminary treatment areas are in the Upper North Fork Little Laramie River watershed. If all preliminary treatments in this watershed (Coal TS, Hopper TS, Pumice TS, Brooklyn Lake Fuels, and Centennial Fuels) were implemented, about 2,400 acres would remain below the yellow-light trigger depending on final prescriptions. The other watersheds (Kelly Ck, Libby Ck) contain smaller preliminary treatment areas; none of these come close to the yellow-light trigger. The North Fk Little Laramie River watershed falls mostly outside the Forest boundary and beyond the influence of Forest Service decision-making; therefore, the zone hydrologist determined there were no concerns for adverse cumulative watershed effects (CWE) in this watershed.

Final treatment acres are likely to be reduced by 10-20% during field validation. The current expectation is that the reduction in acres during field validation would further limit ECA. If analysis of the validated treatment units indicates ECA would increase above 25% in any watershed, the LaVA Appendix A adaptive options would be implemented. These options could include validating watershed information, conducting a stream health assessment, or modifying the project to reduce cumulative watershed effects. Additional design features could be developed to maintain or improve watershed condition.

Trigger 2

Some preliminary treatments may improve habitats for some wildlife species; however, none of the treatments are designed specifically to improve wildlife habitats; therefore, none of the treatments will be counted toward achievement of this trigger. If improvements are planned to Barber Lake, this project could be counted toward achievement of this trigger.

Trigger 3

A limited amount of wildlife security habitat is present at the north edge of the focus area. None of the proposed treatments will affect wildlife security habitat because none is located in the preliminary treatment areas.

Triggers 4-9

Most of the North Fork focus area is in the Snowy Range East Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU) except for a small area around Centennial that falls outside any LAU. The Snowy Range East LAU also covers about half of the Fallen Pines focus area. All proposed projects are entirely within the LAU except Centennial Fuels; most of this project is outside the LAU.

About 3,480 acres of suitable lynx habitat are available for conversion to an unsuitable condition under the yellow-light threshold for Trigger 4 in the Snowy Range East LAU. If all preliminary treatments in both the Fallen Pines and North Fork focus areas were implemented, the amount of conversion of suitable habitat to an unsuitable condition would exceed the yellow-light threshold by nine acres but would remain below the red-light threshold by about 850 acres.

Similarly, about 3,410 acres of suitable lynx habitat are available for conversion to an unsuitable condition by management action in a 10-year period under the yellow-light threshold for Trigger 6 in the Snowy Range East LAU. If all preliminary treatments in both the Fallen Pines and North Fork focus areas were implemented, the amount of conversion of suitable habitat to an unsuitable condition would exceed the yellow-light threshold by 79 acres but would remain below the red-light threshold by about 700 acres.

The precise amount of lynx habitat that would be converted to an unsuitable condition is currently unknown and will not be known until treatment units are validated and prescriptions are finalized. Final treatment acres are likely to be reduced by 10-20% during field validation. The expectation is that the reduction in acres during field validation will reduce the amount of suitable lynx habitat converted to an unsuitable condition and the yellow-light threshold will not be exceeded for Triggers 4 or 6. As field validation proceeds and projects are implemented, we will need to closely track effects to lynx habitat to make sure we do not exceed thresholds.

WUI exemptions are not available in the Snowy Range East LAU (Triggers 5 and 8).

About 261 acres of pre-commercial thinning (PCT) (Trigger 7) is available under the yellow-light trigger in the Snowy Range East LAU. No PCT has been proposed.

There are 2,893 acres of incidental damage (Trigger 9), as defined in the Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment, available within LAUs in the LaVA project. Projects in the North Fork focus area could cause a small but currently unknown amount of incidental damage; however, it is not expected to approach the yellow- or red-light thresholds for this trigger.

Triggers 10 and 11

Across the LaVA landscape, 29.2 miles of temporary roads are planned or in place in approved projects. To date, none of these roads have been rehabilitated because their associated projects are not complete. Use of temporary roads is expected but currently unknown for the Coal, Hopper, and Pumice TS projects.

The use and rehabilitation of temporary roads is expected to be well within the limits for the yellow light (400 miles) and red light (600 miles) triggers.

Trigger 13 and 14

Public access will not be affected in the long-term. Minor, short-term restrictions on some routes may be needed to protect public safety during active treatment operations.

Other Supplemental Information

At this point in the Appendix A process, the need for additional design features is unknown. Additional design features may be needed to address issues that arise when the preliminary treatments are field validated. Additional design features, if any, will be added during preparation of the Implementation Checklist(s).

District Ranger Approval/Review

District Ranger signature confirms all appropriate documentation is attached and planning for the proposed treatment(s) can proceed.

Approved By (District Ranger): Frank Romero

Signature and Date: