

DECISION MEMO
Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project
U.S. Forest Service
New Meadows, Idaho
New Meadows Ranger District, Payette National Forest
Adams County

DECISION

I have decided to approve the Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project, which authorizes the activities described in the Proposed Action (below) and incorporates all design features and mitigation measures listed in [Appendix 4](#).

I have determined the actions proposed will address the purpose and need and move treatment areas towards desired conditions, as described in this decision memo and the project record. The Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project (Little Red Goose) is an excellent example of how we can quickly respond to our changing forest conditions, and the importance of engaging with our communities and local officials to address insect and disease issues that have the potential to affect a much larger area. Much like wildfire, insects and disease do not recognize jurisdictional boundaries, and managing the National Forest to increase its resiliency to such disturbances is critical to being good stewards of the land and responsible neighbors.

BACKGROUND

The project area is located within the Little Salmon River sub-basin in the Upper Goose Creek, Sixmile Creek-Little Salmon River, and Lower Goose Creek-Little Salmon River subwatersheds between McCall and New Meadows, on both sides of US Highway 55. The project is approximately 8,770 acres in a portion of the area previously identified in the ongoing Granite Meadows Project for similar treatment (publically scoped in 2018, still under analysis). See project vicinity map in [Appendix 1](#).

The Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project is within the Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) area, and incorporates input provided from the public and the Payette Forest Coalition on previous CFLR projects, including those provided for the ongoing Granite Meadows project. Areas that receive commercial vegetation treatment under the Little Red Goose project would not be considered for additional commercial vegetation treatments under the Granite Meadows Project. The overlapping area could, however, be analyzed for other treatment activities per the purpose and need of the Granite Meadows Project, including but not limited to watershed restoration activities and recreation management activities, which would not be precluded by actions included in this project.

Portions of the project area are experiencing high insect activity and/or are at high risk for insect infestation and mortality according to a recent USDA Forest Health and Protection report (USDA 2019). Numerous management actions, prolonged fire suppression, and recurring insect and disease outbreaks have contributed to existing conditions in the project area. Fire exclusion has

fostered dense under- and mid-story conditions dominated by shade-tolerant species, increased ladder fuels and decadent shrub and grass communities. Multiple stressors have accumulated impacts within these landscapes since around 2004 (see Primary Damage Agents list below), and bark beetle populations are building.

Primary Damage Agents Observed within the Project Area:

- Douglas-fir tussock moth
- Balsam woolly adelgid
- Douglas-fir beetle
- Fir engraver beetle
- Western balsam bark beetle
- Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe
- Western spruce budworm
- Root and Butt rot (*Armillaria sp.*)

PURPOSE AND NEED

Large scale bark beetle outbreaks can occur when local populations, drought and abundant host trees exists. Douglas-fir tussock moth defoliation is now providing an abundant pulse of host for bark beetles that are already in the area, and a drought is expected to occur within the next several years (USDA 2019). Based on these compounding factors, there is a need for the District and Forest to “adequately address the Douglas-fir tussock moth outbreak currently impacting the analysis area given recent Douglas-fir tussock moth disturbances compounded with chronic western spruce budworm and balsam woolly adelgid and root and butt rots” (USDA 2019).

The purpose of proposed treatments within the project area include:

- Move forest stands toward desired conditions by increasing forest resiliency to insects and disease, and by promoting the development of large tree forest structures mixed with a mosaic of size classes and seral species composition.
- Reduce the risk of additional tree mortality and subsequent tree hazards to forest visitors and infrastructure in areas of high visitor use.

PROPOSED ACTION

Treatments are proposed on up to 3,000 acres identified within the larger 8,770-acre project area described above, and are focused in areas with high levels of insect activity and current and anticipated high levels of tree mortality, as well as adjacent stands at risk due to high stand density. In addition to improving forest health and resiliency, treatments are designed to reduce hazard tree risk to forest visitors and infrastructure in high-use areas (e.g. Last Chance Campground). Proposed treatments are summarized in [Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#) (below). Acres and mileages are approximate.

Table 1: Summary of vegetation treatments.

<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>RCA Acres</u> ¹	<u>Total Acres</u>
Commercial Harvest ²	Thinning with product removal. A combination of harvest treatments may occur within a given commercial unit. May include post-harvest noncommercial thinning, typically of trees <10 inches DBH (<8" in outer RCA's) ⁵ , without product removal		
- Shelterwood	End State: 10-30% canopy closure post-treatment to provide seed and site protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acreage: > 3 acres - Desired trees per acre: 17-20 trees per acre, spatially distributed throughout unit 	48.4	1097
- Free Thin	End State: Maximize the retention of trees resilient to insects and disease in stands with canopy cover of early seral species greater than 35% to improve stand health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerations: stands with Douglas-fir greater than 20"/pure ponderosa with 100 basal area (BA) or greater should be thinned 	13.7	531
- Patch Cut	End State: < 10% canopy closure post-treatment to provide seed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acreage: up to 40 acres - Stocking: 5-10 trees per acre preferably spatial distributed 	0	283
- Aspen ³	End State: reestablish and invigorate aspen where present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cut all conifers within 100 feet of the south and west edges of aspen and within 50 feet on the north and east edges. Healthy western larch may be retained. - No openings larger than 40 acres 	0	22
Total Acres		62	1933
Understory Treatments			
Noncommercial Thinning ⁴	Thinning of small-diameter trees (<10" DBH) for stand improvement and fuels management. In RCAs, thinning would be restricted to <8" DBH.	181	2,816
Prescribed Fire ⁵	Prescribed fire will be applied to improve stand and fuels conditions. Ignitions will be by ground or air. Maintenance burning (burning after initial application of fire) will occur as necessary to maintain desired conditions. Prescribed fire can occur any time of year when conditions permit, typically spring (April-June) and fall (August-October).		2,985

¹ Proposed activities in the outer half of Riparian Conservation Areas (RCA).

² Thinning with product removal May include post-harvest noncommercial thinning

³ Aspen may be present within other treatment polygons and would receive treatment to promote aspen regen where present

⁴ General term for noncommercial thinning does not include product removal; typically trees <40 inches DBH

⁵ Treatment of slash: After commercial treatments and/or noncommercial thinning, slash reduction would include pile burning, hand piling and burning, lop and scatter, broadcast/underburning and/or removal.

Table 2: – Road treatments and actions associated with commercial harvest treatment activities.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>RCA† Miles*</u>	<u>Miles*</u>
New	Temporary Road	New temporary road constructed and used to assist with timber sale activities. All will be obliterated as part of timber sale contract.	0	<1
Non-System Decom Treatment	Obliteration	Total Soil Resource Commitment Reduction ⁶ Roads identified as Moderate and High priority for from Soils, Hydrology and Fisheries. These non-system roads will be fully obliterated to improve TSRC	2.5	8.5
	Stabilization or Closure	Haul on Existing Prism/Non-system Roads: Non-system roads used as part of timber sale will receive stabilization and closure treatments. Treatments will be applied post-haul under the timber sale contract (see applicable PDF)	0.4	6.7
System	Reconstruction or Maintenance	Haul Routes: As part of timber sale activities, existing system roads will receive reconstruction and/or maintenance. Following harvest activities, closed system roads used as haul routes will be returned to designated maintenance levels.	5	44.4

† Riparian Conservation Area (RCA)

*Approximate mileage

The precise location of temporary roads cannot be determined until a contract for treatment is secured and the type of equipment to be used is determined. All temporary roads, landings, and skid trails used will be approved by the FS Timber Sale Administrator in accordance with resource protection measures and project design features. Skid trails will be obliterated after use.

Vegetation treatments are designed to promote species adapted to disturbance and desired forest and wildlife habitat conditions in accordance with the Payette Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Land Management Plan) (2003). Treatments will maximize the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease. Additionally, the project considered the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity.

Maintenance burning (burning after initial application of fire) will occur as necessary according to Fire Regime conditions to maintain desired conditions; especially density management, forest

⁶ Mitigating TSRC per Forest Plan and identified in the ongoing Granite Meadows Project analysis. Additional restoration opportunities might be pursued as timber sale activities are finalized in contract.

structural and species composition diversity. Prescribed burning operations may occur at any time of year when conditions permit, typically spring (April, May, June) and fall (August, September, October). Prescribed fire will occur after harvest activities and ground disturbance from heavy equipment has been completed. Prescribed fires will be designed to achieve a mosaic of burned and unburned areas resulting in low soil severities and low-moderate vegetation severities in treatment areas.

Road maintenance activities to facilitate commercial harvest will occur on NFS roads within and around the project area. Temporary roads may be constructed for project implementation and will be decommissioned within three years of project completion. Additional non-system road decommission or obliteration has been identified to mitigate effects related to the proposed activities by reducing the total soil resource commitment within the project area and improving soil health and watershed conditions per the Land Management Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Based on discussions with agency specialists, partners and tribal groups, I have determined that the Little Red Goose project meets each of the criteria specified in Section 603 of HFRA (16 U.S.C.6591b)(FSH 1909.15, 32.3(3)). Additionally, as described in 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6), no resource conditions are present that lead to a finding of extraordinary circumstances that might cause the action to have significant effects (see [Appendix 3](#)). I have examined the proposed actions and specialist reviews, and have concluded that because there are no notable individual effects from the proposed action, there will be no significant cumulative effects.

Based on these findings, I believe that the effects on the quality of the human environment are not individually or cumulatively significant; therefore the action is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Forest Plan Consistency (National Forest Management Act)

This decision is consistent and was designed in conformance with the Payette National Forest Land Management Plan (Land Management Plan). See also the Interdisciplinary Concurrence checklist in [Appendix 2](#).

Endangered Species Act & Sensitive Species (Forest Service Manual 2670)

Project specialists evaluated the proposed action for compliance with the Endangered Species Act. Reviews for threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate plants and animals and their proposed or designated critical habitat are contained within the project record, and are summarized in [Appendix 3](#).

Clean Water Act

The Forest Service complies with this Act through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). Mitigating the risk of sedimentation into water bodies is consistent with SWST01; by

meeting SWST01 and maintaining or improving relevant Watershed Condition Indicators (WCI), compliance with State water quality directives and the Clean Water Act is demonstrated.

Clean Air Act

All prescribed burning will be conducted under the guidelines and subject to approval of the Idaho/Montana Airshed Group. The on-site burn boss would also ensure that smoke dispersion meets the standard and shut down operations when appropriate. Burning activities will comply with the Clean Air Act.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)

The proposed action has been assessed to determine whether it would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. Based on the scoping process, effects analysis, and consultation process with Native American Tribes, no environmental justice issues were identified.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (Executive Order 13186)

The project wildlife biologist assessed the effects of the proposed action on migratory birds. Effects to migratory birds have been minimized by considering timing of activities and including design features for species with habitat within the project area. The proposed action may impact individuals or habitat for some species, but would not trend the species toward Federal listing.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – Section 106 Review

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding Section 106 compliance:

No adverse effects to historic properties - 36 CFR 800.5(b). Section 106 Review has been completed and no National Register eligible cultural sites are located within the project area. Modifications can avoid/protect cultural resources (see also Appendices 3 and 4).

Tribal Consultation

Based on the nature of the proposal and the following consultation efforts, the line officer/responsible official determined that consultation with American Indian Tribes has been completed.

Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall Reservation: Letter sent on September 24, 2019. No response received.

Nez Perce Tribe: Letter sent September 27, 2019. No response received.

Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation: Letter provided and topic presented at the Wings and Roots meeting in Boise, ID on October 10, 2019. No cultural or religious sites were identified for protection within the project area.

COLLABORATION & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement for this project has been extensive. This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Payette National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically

during the analysis. The project was presented to the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) on Sept 19, 2019 and October 17, 2019 at the Payette NF Supervisor's Office. The Payette Forest Coalition provided a Letter of Support dated October 17, 2019 which can be found on the project webpage. The Adams County Commissioners also provided a letter of support for the project on August 19, 2019.

The Little Red Goose project was published as a Legal Notice in the Idaho Statesman on September 20, 2019. This publication initiated the scoping period, which concluded on October 21, 2019. A Press Release was sent to media outlets on September 20th as well.

A scoping letter of potential actions in the Little Red Goose project landscape was published on September 20, 2019 on the Payette National Forest public projects webpage under the [Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project](#) page. A scoping letter was sent via GovDelivery to the list of subscribers to Payette National Forest projects, approximately 360 recipients, on September 20, 2019. The Forest Service received one comment during the scoping period, which was in support of the project. That comment is located in the project record.

The Forest Service hosted a public meeting on October 9, 2019 at 6:30 pm at the Hunt Lodge Holiday Inn Express, McCall, ID. This meeting was advertised in public signboard postings and on Payette NF Facebook page.

Forest Service representatives attended numerous association/group meetings and events to inform the public of the project, including Meadows Valley Logger Days September 1, 2019, the Valley County Groomers Association meeting on October 10, 2019, and the Meadows Creak Property Owners Association (MCPOA) board meeting on October 19, 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is not subject to administrative review, appeal, or objection as decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation are not subject to an administrative review process (Agriculture Act of 2014 [Pub. L. No. 113-79], Subtitle A, Sec. 8006)

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation of this project can be immediately. Commercial timber activities are anticipated to begin in early 2020, and can be expected to last for 3-7 years from contract award date. Prescribed fire activities will continue until desired conditions are achieved or until changes in conditions warrant a new decision.



Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project



CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

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J. Brummett

11/18/19

Tawnya Brummett

Date

Acting Payette National Forest Supervisor

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APPENDIX 1: MAPS

Figure 1 – Project Vicinity

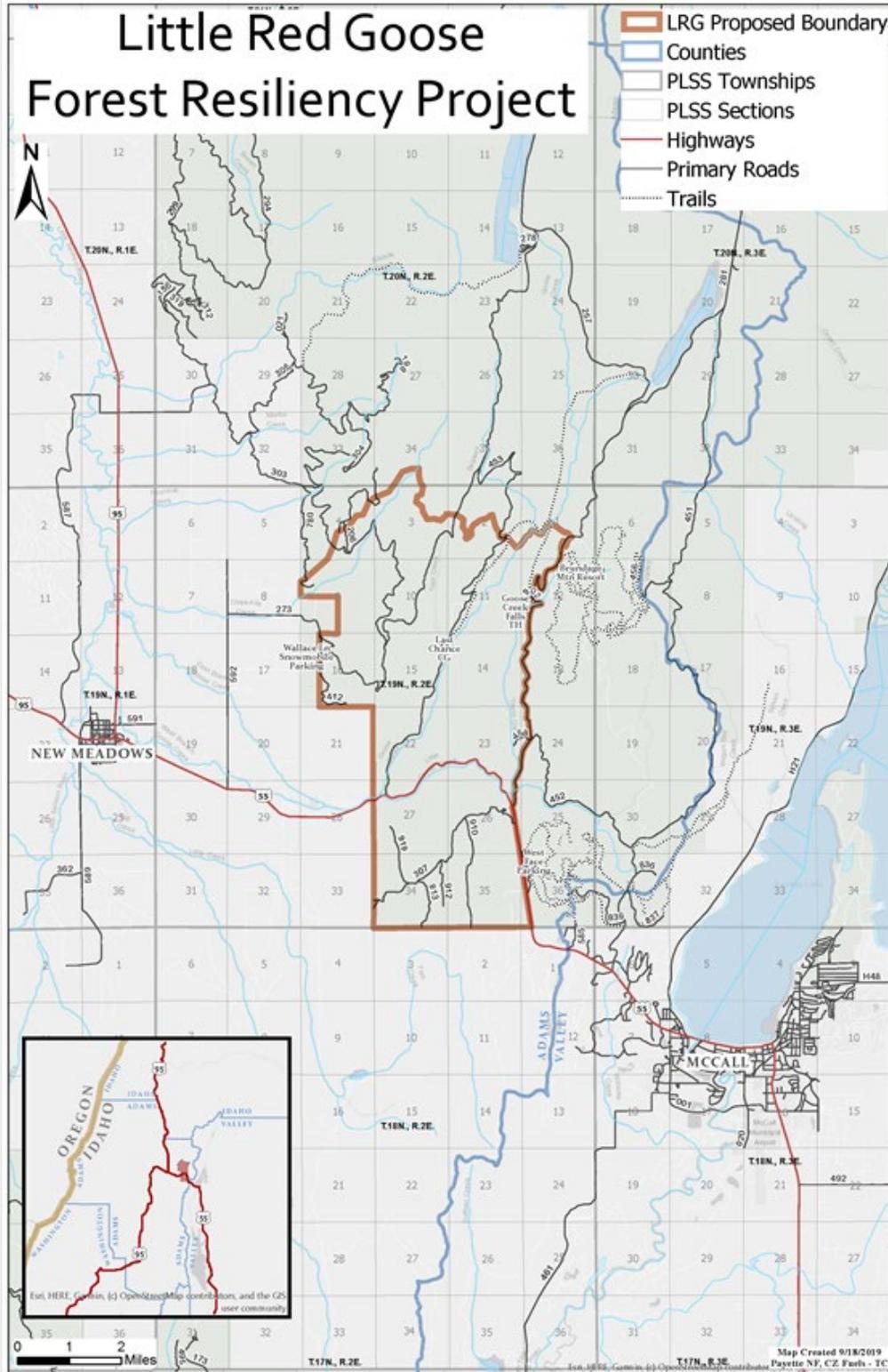


Figure 2 – Proposed vegetation management

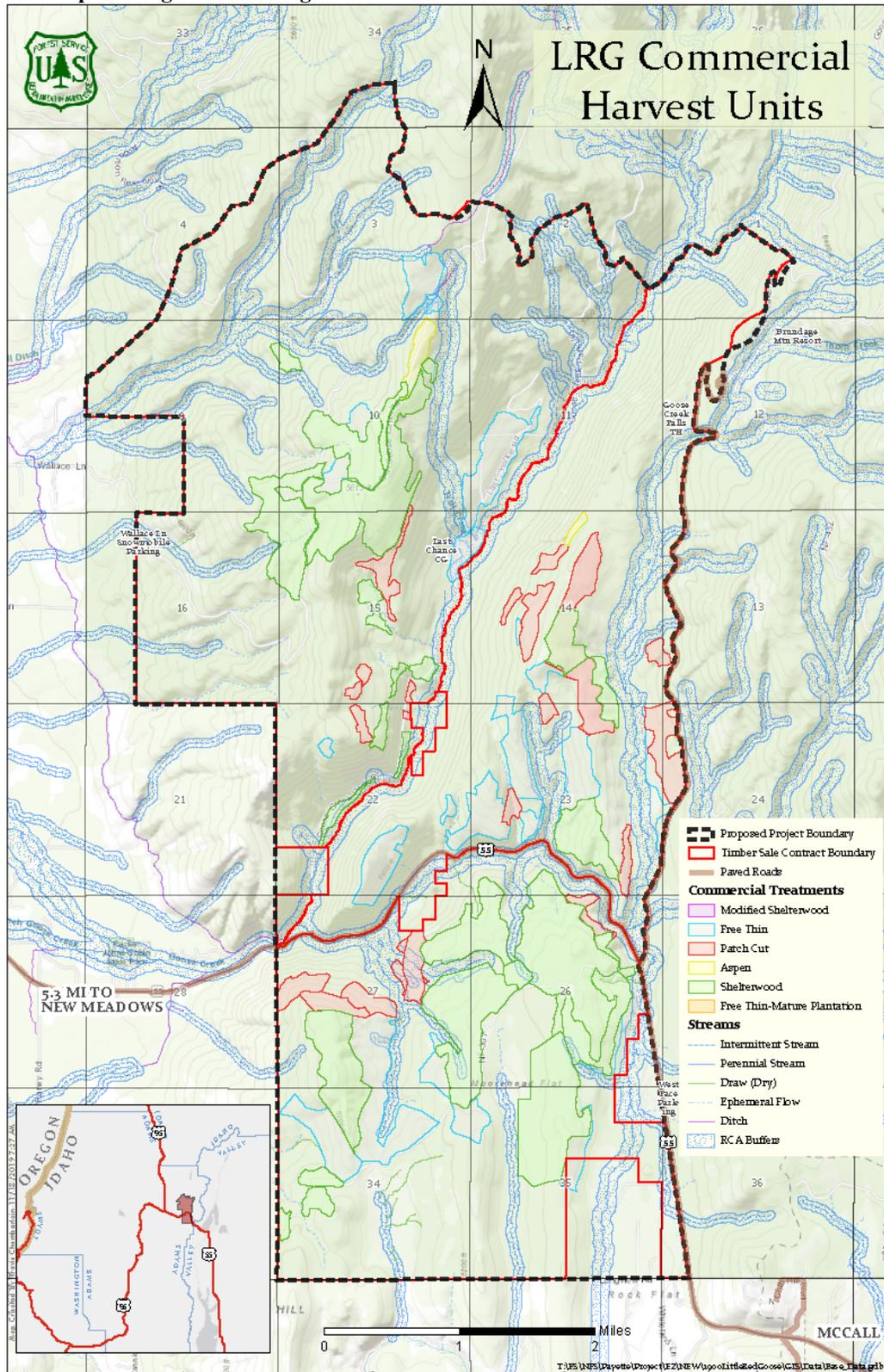
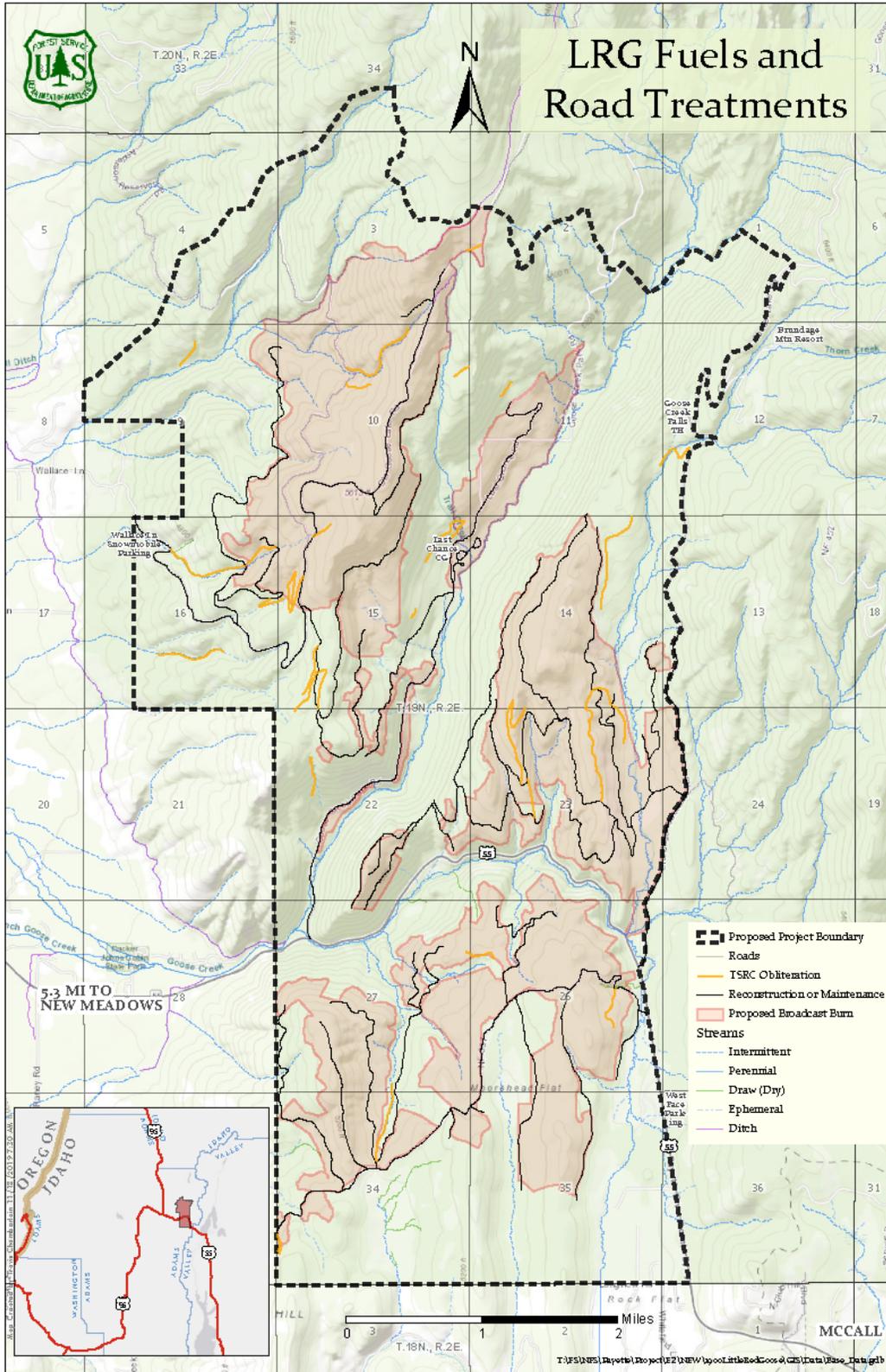


Figure 3 – Road maintenance



APPENDIX 2: INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM CONCURRENCE

The checklist below indicates that the pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and has determined that the proposed actions and anticipated effects are consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan. Signatures from each specialist are included in the Project Record

Table 3: IDT Concurrence

Botany: Consistent

Engineering: Consistent

Fisheries: Consistent

Fuels: Consistent

Heritage: Consistent

Hydrology: Consistent

Range: Consistent

Recreation: Consistent

Silviculture: Consistent

Soils: Consistent

Wildlife: Consistent

APPENDIX 3: EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations with regards to degree of potential effects for the resource conditions considered.

Table 4: Resource Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain. ¹²
<p>Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species</p>	<p>BOTANY: NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale: There are no known populations or suitable habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed or candidate plant species within the project area. One sensitive plant species (<i>Allium madidum</i>) is present within the project area and may experience potential impacts to individuals or habitat, but impacts will be minimized or avoided through application of project design features such that impacts would not contribute to a trend toward federal listing.</p> <p>FISHERIES: NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale: No ESA-Listed fishes or their respective Critical Habitat are found within or immediately downstream of the Project Area. Critical habitat and ESA-listed species are located downstream of the project area; however habitat conditions, including sediment production are not expected to be measureable in fish habitat in or immediately downstream of the Project Area and due to the intervening, low gradient stream miles between the project area and areas that are either occupied or CH, no transmittal of effects (increase or decrease) is expected downstream in the Little Salmon River.</p> <p>WILDLIFE: NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale: There are no threatened or endangered species or critical habitat within the project area. Thirteen Sensitive species will not be impacted by proposed activities. The remaining five sensitive species may experience potential impacts to individuals or habitat, but impacts will be minimized or avoided through application of project design features such that impacts would not contribute to a trend toward federal listing.</p>
<p>Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale: The project is not expected to negatively affect a floodplain or wetland. The project is in compliance with Executive Orders 11988 (floodplains) and 11990 (wetlands). Project is not in a municipal watershed.</p>
<p>Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas</p>	<p>N/A, not present</p>
<p>Inventoried roadless areas</p>	<p>N/A, not present</p>

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain. ¹²
Research natural areas	N/A, not present
American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites	NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale: Through consultation, tribes did not identify any cultural or religious sites within the project area.
Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas	NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale: The Payette NF Archaeologist determined that the proposed project would cause no effect to historic properties (36 CFR 800.4(d) (1)). The Payette Heritage program will be notified if any additional cultural resources are located during project implementation.

APPENDIX 4: PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

The New Meadows Ranger District will continue to implement an interdisciplinary check-in prior to commencing project activities to ensure actions are within the scope of the effects analysis and are in line with the following project design features.

HERITAGE

Project Design Features		Objective
Cultural Resources		
1	Avoid all historic properties during project implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sites will be monitored and flagged prior to implementation to ensure avoidance. 	Prevent damage to site.
2	Cap archaeological site located on 51775 with filter fabric and archaeologically sterile material to a width of 14 foot and a depth of 6 inches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work will be completed through force account and monitored by Heritage staff prior to contract implementation. No off road travel, staging, or harvest within site boundaries. 	Prevent damage to site

RECREATION

Project Design Features		Objective
Recreation		
Groomed Routes and Parking Areas		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using groomed snowmobile routes for winter logging, attempts will be made to maintain minimum levels of snow to accommodate snow travel on non-haul days. Consider alternative snowmobile routes and/or access and parking when winter log haul occurs on roads normally used as groomed snowmobile routes. Coordinate with the contractors and local organization(s) responsible for trail grooming to minimize impacts on forest visitors. Minimize use of recreation sites such as parking areas, campground, trailhead and trails for staging, piles and landings. Exception could occur within Last Chance Campground during implementation of activities within/adjacent to the campground. 	Minimize impacts to recreating public within the project area during winter operations.



Little Red Goose Forest Resilience Project



Project Design Features		Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure placement of slash and burn piles does not impede groomed snowmobile routes. • Road obliteration should not render groomed snowmobile routes unusable. 	
Campgrounds, Roads and Trails		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campground infrastructure should be identified and marked as needed to ensure visibility and protection during project activities • Dust will be abated on Forest Service roads when conditions warrant adjacent to Last Chance Campground. • Hauling will be minimized on NFS roads on Memorial Day weekend and on weekends and federal holidays from July 1 through November 30 to provide for public safety • In areas within and adjacent to Last Chance Campground and Goose Creek Falls Trail, stumps will be cut to a maximum 6 inches in height. • In Last Chance Campground, slash will be removed within 1 year after log haul is completed. Removal may include dispersal, chipping hauling or burning with the outcome achieving a more natural appearance • Goose Creek Trail and Goose Creek Falls Trail will be protected or re-established as needed following harvest or burning activities. • Closures of developed recreation sites such as Last Chance CG, Goose Creek Trailhead and Goose Creek Falls TH will generally be avoided. However, if deemed necessary for public and/or contractor safety, inform the public in a timely manner about these closures. Closures will be temporary and will generally be less than one year. 	Minimize impacts to recreating public within the project area

SCENERY MANAGEMENT

Project Design Features		Objective
Visual Quality Objectives		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ridgeline silhouettes in VQO* classifications of mgR, mgPR, and bgR should not have unnatural-appearing breaks along them (e.g. feather the edges of units). Consider timely initiation of reseeded in areas within VQO* classifications of fgR, fgPR, mgR, and mgPR to allow for herbaceous vegetative recovery of ground cover if needed. Slash and harvest residues remaining after project completion should appear to be naturally occurring in lands with a VQO* of fgR and mostly naturally occurring in fgPR. Techniques to mitigate visibility of slash include lopping to low heights, burning, physically removing material excess to other resource needs, and dispersing concentrations. Most timber changes in areas classified under Forest VQOs* as mgR should be textural with some small, simulated natural openings visible where openings already occur, or a limited number of small natural-appearing openings. 	Retain visual qualities and help keep the form, line, color and texture descriptions for these VQO's.

ROADS

Project Design Features		Objective
Engineering and Roads		
6	Contamination or displacement of road surface aggregate associated with logging activities (skidding or snow plowing) will be repaired/replaced at the purchaser's expense. Any damage to or debris left on the road template (shoulders, ditch line, or surface) will be repaired or removed prior to seasonal shutdown.	Retention of road surface/prism



SILVICULTURE

Project Design Features		Objective
Silviculture		
7	Following harvest and prescribed fire operations, the larger aspen stands should be evaluated for the need to protect aspen regeneration from damage by cattle, deer, and elk. Possible protection measures will include temporary electric fencing or rough windrow fencing using felled trees.	Protect aspen regeneration from large animal damage.
8	Use the bark beetle (Scolytidae) contract provision for stands where substantial amounts of ponderosa pine will be harvested, if the proposed unit is near a plantation with a component of ponderosa pine.	Minimize bark beetle population buildup.
9	Prior to and during implementation, site-specific design features could be developed by soil and timber specialists to minimize soil disturbance from non-standard equipment use in harvest units that will receive commercial firewood treatment instead of commercial timber harvest.	Ensure soil impacts are mitigated with non-standard equipment

SOILS

Project Design Feature		Objective
SOIL, WATER, RIPARIAN AND AQUATIC RESOURCES		
10	<p>Soil Resource Protection: Harvesting, Skidding and Yarding</p> <p>The following measures are included to minimize detrimental impacts to soil productivity and soil-hydrologic condition and meet Forest Plan standards for soil productivity.</p> <p>Soil moisture operability requirements</p> <p>Ground-based heavy equipment will be allowed when soil moisture is sufficiently low, or when adequate winter logging conditions exist with a sufficient depth of packed snow and/or frozen ground. The Forest Service will ultimately determine when and where appropriate operating conditions exist. The intent is to minimize detrimental soil rutting, displacement, and compaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine appropriate soil moistures for operations, use the “Field Guide to Soil Moisture Conditions Relative to Operability of Logging Equipment”, available in the project implementation guide document. 	Minimize soil disturbance from heavy machinery.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptions may be made to allow limited operations on moist soils only on excavated skid trails and landings. • Adequate winter logging conditions should include a sufficient depth of frozen ground and/or packed, dense snow to support machine traffic and prevent detrimental soil disturbance. Typically these conditions are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 4 in. depth of frozen soil and no snow, or • Minimum 2 in. depth of frozen soil and 6 in. machine packed snow, or • 0 in. depth of frozen soil and minimum 10 in. machine packed snow <p>Heavy equipment for ground-based harvesting systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy equipment is generally restricted to slopes up to 35%, with site-specific exceptions allowing operations on steeper slopes. <p>Skid Trails and Skidding Design and designate skid trail systems to minimize new soil disturbance. Give preference to reusing and rehabilitating existing skid trails and landings. If overwintering skid trails, install waterbars where needed to prevent concentrated water flow and erosion.</p> <p>Skidding on nonconstructed skid trails Nonconstructed trails will be spaced an average minimum distance of 100 feet, where feasible.</p> <p>Skidding on constructed skid trails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction (i.e., benching) of excavated skid trails will be allowed on hillslopes up to 45% slope for use in cable-yarding systems. • Constructed trails should not exceed 30% grade, except for short distances. Where feasible, construct trails an average minimum distance of 200 feet between constructed trails. Minimize the width and depth of excavation as much as possible. 	
11	<p><u>Soil Disturbance Rehabilitation</u> <i>Rehabilitation will occur within 1 year following harvest activities unless otherwise negotiated and approved by the Forest Service.</i></p> <p>Areas of relic soil compaction outside of designated skid trail network and identified during implementation are candidates for remediation, as determined by the Forest Service. Constructed skid trails, landings, and temporary road surfaces should be decompacted to full depth of compaction and recontoured to the natural slope profile. Exceptions to decompacting and recontouring may be permitted due to operational infeasibility. Decompaction techniques will emphasize slight lifting and fracturing, not plowing or mixing.</p>	Drive post-disturbance soil recovery; minimize newly created or existing areas of total soil resource commitment and detrimental disturbance.

	<p>Nonconstructed skid trails will be fully decompacted on the entire width if compacted (typically >4 in. depth of compaction with strong platy or massive structure). Typically this is a minimum distance of 100-200 feet from landings and primary skid trails. Exceptions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If impacts are mainly limited to track ruts and the centerline of the skid trail is not compacted and still vegetated, subsoil only within defined track ruts if they are compacted to > 4 inch depth. • If decompaction will fracture the roots of tree greater than 8 inches diameter breast height, decompaction should be restricted in that specific area. This area is typically defined by the tree drip line, or a set radius around such trees will be determined by the Forest Service. <p>Soil Displacement Rehabilitation</p> <p>Displaced mineral topsoil will be pulled back according to the general criteria below, unless otherwise approved by a soil scientist. This work may be completed by hand or with an excavator on slopes up to 40%. Otherwise this work needs to be completed by hand on slopes >40%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When treatments activity displaces a continuous >4 inch depth of mineral topsoil on > 10 sq. ft. area OR • In defined ruts with continuous displaced mineral topsoil berms > 4 inches in height and longer than 10 feet • Reclaim disturbed soil by pulling displaced mineral topsoil berms back to original configuration <p>Soil Cover</p> <p>Following harvest activities, slash, fine and coarse woody debris will be placed as a protective cover and nutrient source on disturbed soils. This activity should provide 50-80% effective ground cover, OR the minimum amount necessary to inhibit overland flow.</p>	
12	<p>Coarse Woody Debris</p> <p>If needed for meeting CWD tonnages, available cull material longer than 6 feet or other noncommercial material (e.g. decked firewood, operational trees, snags felled for safety reasons) will be utilized to meet the CWD requirement. Preference should be given to larger-diameter material to meet these requirements (prioritize >15 in. diameter if available).</p>	<p>Maintain CWD for long-term site productivity and for wildlife species.</p>

<p>13</p>	<p>Prescribed Fire Prescribed burn activities should employ the following techniques to minimize the degree and extent of soil damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcast Burn: Prescribed fires should be conducted when environmental and fuel conditions will result in overall low soil burn severity, with minor discontinuous amounts of moderate severity and negligible amounts of high severity. Prescribed fire will occur after harvest activities and ground disturbance from heavy equipment has been completed. • Pile burning: To minimize effects of hand piles within treatment units, piles should be <10 feet in diameter, <6 feet tall and well dispersed. In order to minimize soil burn severity during hand pile burning, 1) do not hand pile material greater than 4 inch diameter in order to reduce burn residence time or 2) deck larger logs to create an insulating air cushion over the soil surface. When feasible, locate hand piles and landing piles on previously disturbed areas. Areas with continuous high soil burn severity should be rehabilitated (burned log landings, concentrated hand-piles). <u>Rehabilitation</u> may include mixing ash and surface scorched soils with deeper unburned soils with placement of available slash, fine and coarse woody debris as a protective cover and source of organic matter to initiate soil recovery. Weed treatment and planting/seeding of pile-burning areas will also improve recovery. <p>Fireline reclamation when necessary to meet recovery objectives in poor recovery soils, fireline rehabilitation may occur following burn activities. Reclamation activities will include, but are not limited to: pulling all material removed for fireline construction back onto fireline (including mineral soil as available), pulling available slash onto the surface to achieve a minimum 50% ground cover of the disturbed soil. Construct waterbars only when full reclamation is not possible. <i>Reclamation should take place within the same season as the burn, if possible.</i></p>	<p>Minimize detrimental soil disturbance from prescribed burning. Maintain CWD for long-term site productivity and for wildlife species. Initiate post-disturbance soil recovery</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Landslide Prone High- and moderate-risk landslide prone areas have been identified and either removed from harvest unit boundaries or prescribed heavy tree-retention. Areas of instability were found in or near proposed harvest units 64, 113, 114, 59, 60, 110 and 1A. If additional unstable landslide prone areas are encountered, maintain stability in the following ways:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit harvested gap openings to 40-60ft. between mature live deep rooted trees. Favor longer-lived species such as ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, where ecologically appropriate. • Avoid pile burning and root mortality from broadcast burning. • Avoid road and skid trail construction on moderate- and high-risk LSP areas, and avoid concentrating water onto LSP areas from road drainage. • On the most unstable high-risk areas, harvest, burning or road/trail construction may be prohibited. 	
15	<p>Units of Special Concern</p> <p>In order to meet Forest Plan Soil Standard (SWST02), the following units will receive special attention to all applicable PDFs and mitigation measures, plus the following additional unit-specific measures:</p> <p><u>Unit 7 and 8:</u> During contract preparation, administration and post-harvest activities, protective and restorative practices may include: encouraging winter logging , minimizing areas subject to machine traffic, reuse of existing disturbed areas, increased skid trail spacing, increased recruitment of fine slash and coarse woody material during and after harvest activities, encourage jammer-yarding from existing roads, plan prescribed burning timing and techniques to minimize detrimental soil impacts, identify additional soil restoration opportunities within or adjacent to these units. Consult soil scientist as needed.</p> <p><u>Unit 102:</u> Obliterate existing unauthorized routes in or adjacent to unit to initiate recovery of soil productivity. A minimum of 0.3 miles of unauthorized routes are identified (ID 517792300, ID 517731000) and additional opportunities for soil rehabilitation are present in or adjacent to the unit (old skid trails, unauthorized routes, compacted landing areas).</p> <p><u>Unit 104:</u> Obliterate existing unauthorized routes in or adjacent to unit to initiate recovery of soil productivity. A minimum of 0.14 miles of unauthorized routes are identified (ID 503079910, ID 503079900) and additional opportunities for soil rehabilitation are present in or adjacent to the unit (old skid trails, unauthorized routes, compacted landing areas).</p>	<p>Drive post-disturbance soil recovery; minimize newly created or existing areas of total soil resource commitment and detrimental disturbance.</p>



HYDRO/FISHERIES

Project Design Features		Objective
SOIL, WATER, RIPARIAN AND AQUATIC RESOURCES		
General		
16	Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Soil Water Conservation Practices (SWCPs) for harvest, road, and ground disturbing activities as determined by a fisheries biologist, soil scientist and/or hydrologist (or designee).	Reduce levels of soil disturbance, erosion and potential sedimentation, meet requirements of the State of Idaho non-point source pollution Management Plan, Maintain, water quality and associated beneficial uses.
17	Locate and approve water drafting sites prior to use. The project fisheries biologist or hydrologist must approve the sites. No vehicles will be allowed in stream courses at any time for the purpose of withdrawing water. Drafting hoses will be required to be fitted with screens with a 3/32 inch mesh and the appropriate surface area to be consistent with NOAA guidelines.	Minimize impacts to stream channels, RCAs, and resident fishes.
SWRA - Vegetation Treatments		
18	The project has selected Option 2 (Appendix B of the Forest Plan) to delineate RCAs. Field verification of RCAs will be completed using the following criteria. <u>Perennial Streams</u> – flood-prone width or two site-potential tree heights (240 feet), whichever is greatest. <u>Intermittent Streams</u> – flood-prone width or one site-potential tree height (120 feet), whichever is greatest. Buffers will also be applied to any unmapped streams, springs, or wetlands discovered during implementation.	Maintain riparian function.
19	The following guidelines will be used for RCA treatment layout and implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas with early seral species in the outer portion of the RCA will be treated with intermediate Silvicultural treatments (e.g. free thin). • Commercial thinning, including post and pole, could only occur in the outer half of RCA's 	Maintain riparian processes and function.

Project Design Features		Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No ground-based harvest equipment is allowed in RCAs unless otherwise reviewed by an aquatics or soils specialist. Jammer or skyline yarding will be completed from existing roads or from outside the RCA, unless otherwise approved by the Forest Service. Where possible due to existing conditions, RCA treatments will retain 10-15' canopy spacing between seral species according to the RCA prescription. Site-specific design features will be developed for Last Chance Campground by Recreation and SWRA specialists to minimize impacts to campground infrastructure and SWRA resources in the RCA. 	
20	Treatments within the Meadows Summit Creek and Tributary 2 to East Branch Goose Creek drainages will incorporate adjustments to reduce ECA and the potential for deleterious effects to streams (e.g. retaining additional live trees, removing areas from treatment, etc.).	
Prescribed Fire		
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In RCAs identified for treatment, no ignitions within the inner portion of the RCA; burning within the outer RCAs should result in a mosaic pattern of desired fire effects. No construction of mechanical (heavy equipment) fireline shall occur in RCAs. Handline should be minimized in RCAs by using existing roads, natural features, and the use of hoselays. 	Maintain riparian function.
Non Commercial/Ladder Fuel Thinning		
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-commercial thinning in RCAs will be completed by hand and will generally not cut trees larger than 8 inches DBH. Non-commercial thinning in areas outside RCA's will generally not cut trees larger than 10 inches DBH Piling of slash should not occur within RCAs. 	Maintain riparian function.
Temporary Road Construction and Skid Trails		
23	Avoid temporary road construction, skid trails, skyline corridors in RCAs. Any ground disturbance in RCAs should use sediment fences, wood straw, jute matting or other erosion control measures deemed necessary by a fisheries biologist and/or hydrologist (or designee).	Promote native revegetation and reduce erosion and sediment input to stream channels.
24	Within areas that may contribute sediment to stream channels, construct slash filter	Minimize the extent of sediment routing to

Project Design Features		Objective
	windrows at the toe of fill slopes on newly constructed landings and temporary roads concurrent with construction. Limit the height of windrows to less than three feet; dispose of excess material as necessary. Provide breaks (every 100-300 feet) to allow passage.	stream channels.
25	Haul on Existing Prism/Non System Roads—Stabilization and Closure: Existing non system roads that are used for vegetation management activities and not identified for obliteration will receive decommissioning treatments to provide effective motorized closure and stabilization. Treatments include scarifying the driving surface, seeding or hydro-mulching the treadway, cut slopes, and fills slopes where necessary, installing waterbars as needed and pulling culverts where necessary. Level of erosion control measures are to be determined by a fisheries biologist, soil scientist and/or hydrologist (or designee). All culverts installed to facilitate use of the road will be removed.	Reduce long-term sediment production, retain aquatic organism passage and hydrologic function. Prevent unauthorized motorized use and impacts.
26	Obliteration of new temporary roads (within 1 year following harvest activities) and non system roads identified for watershed restoration and Total Soil Resource Commitment reduction: Roads will be decompacted a depth of 16” or the extent possible, fully recontoured, seeded with native seeds (where need is identified), and provided with a minimum of 50% to maximum of 80% ground cover (vegetation transplants at a rate of 15 per 100 linear feet, natural mulch, CWD, or wood straw, in that order of preference) to an extent deemed necessary by a fisheries biologist, soil scientist and/or hydrologist. In addition, stream crossings will receive planted vegetation plugs and additional ground cover to an extent deemed necessary by a soil scientist and/or hydrologist, to reduce erosion, facilitate recovery of soil function and stabilize streambanks. ID 508172000 has been identified for partial obliteration; coordination with Range is necessary to determine the extent and location of treatment while still accommodating permitted access/use. To ensure compliance with SWST04, SWST02 and SWST03, additional non system roads may be identified to receive obliteration treatment to achieve maintenance/reduction of sediment rates and attainment of desired conditions.	Minimize sediment delivery to stream channels and rehabilitate riparian areas. Reduce levels of TSRC. Prevent unauthorized motorized use and impacts.
27	Closed System Roads Used for Haul will receive closure treatments to the degree necessary to meet assigned maintenance levels following completion of harvest activities.	

WILDLIFE

Northern Goshawk		
28	<p>Known northern goshawk (NOGO) nests will be protected within a 30-acre forested nest stand as determined by the wildlife biologist in coordination with the sale administrator and/or timber staff.</p> <p>During vegetation management operations, if a new NOGO nest is located, onsite activities should cease until a survey can determine if the nest is active. If the nest is active, operations in those 30 acres should be halted until the end of the nesting season (March 1 to Sept. 30). Operations may resume earlier than Sept. 30 if it is determined that the birds are no longer present. Refer to the Project Record for nest site locations, PFA protocol and associated units.</p>	<p>Minimize effects to northern goshawk from project activities. Compliance with Forest Plan direction</p>
Great Gray Owl		
29	<p>Great gray owl nesting sites that have not been identified prior to vegetation or Rx fire treatments, may require protected activity centers (PACs) to retain nesting and rearing habitat that is sufficient to rear fledgling great gray owls <i>e.g.</i> PVG 6 clumps w/in 300 ft. of meadow habitat.</p>	<p>Minimize effects on great gray owls, primarily during nesting</p>
Elk		
30	<p>Provide a radius of 2 elk sight distances (total of 400 feet) of vegetation to protect mineral licks and elk wallows. Harvest or prescribed burning in these sites will require review by the wildlife biologist.</p>	<p>Minimize vulnerability to hunting mortality and provide habitat security</p>



BOTANY

Project Design Features		Objective
BOTANICAL RESOURCES		
General		
31	Treatments within Timber Unit 111 will be designed (and adapted as needed) to restore swamp onion habitat in coordination with the Forest Botanist.	Minimize impacts to TESPC plants and compliance with Forest Plan direction.
32	Heavy equipment, fireline, burn piles, landings and skidding will avoid mapped swamp onion populations (Timber Units 101,107, 111 and 11A). If avoidance is not possible, coordination with the Forest Botanist will occur and site-specific protective measures may be implemented.	
33	Timber Units 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 08 and 11 will be surveyed for Sierra sanicle populations if timber harvest activities in these units are not planned to occur over snow/frozen ground. Site-specific protective measures may be implemented to ensure habitat is maintained or restored.	
34	If other special status plant populations are identified during survey or implementation, site-specific design features to ensure habitat is maintained or restored will be developed in coordination with the Forest Botanist.	
35	Spring prescribed fire treatment within a 30ft. boundary of mapped swamp onion populations will be avoided.	
36	If necessary, fuels loading will be manipulated in mapped swamp onion populations to achieve a low intensity, low severity prescribed burn. This will reduce potential impacts to bulbs located at or near the soil surface.	
37	Landing sites and non-system roads slated for obliteration will be surveyed or analyzed for sensitive plant potential prior to log piling road decommissioning activities. If special status plants are found, mitigation to reduce or avoid impacts will be developed in coordination with the Forest Botanist.	

RANGE

Project Design Features		Objective
Invasive Species Management		
38	Special attention will be applied to heavily disturbed sites (landing sites, skid trails, temp roads) following harvest and prescribed burning projects. Sites in the Rocky Goose Project area have the potential to be pre-treated for invasive species prior to the project activities. Sites will be monitored and potentially treated for 5 years following the conclusion of projects. Sites will be prioritized according to species, infestation density and size.	Compliance to and in Addition to Forest Plan direction
39	If invasive species occur within or adjacent to occupied TESPC plant habitat, measures to avoid weed establishment and spread will be taken and prioritized. All invasive species treatments in TESPC plant habitat will be developed in coordination with the Forest Botanist.	Maintain TESPC plant habitat and Forest Plan compliance.
Project Design Features		Objective
Livestock Management		
40	Protect range improvements within project area. Replace or reconstruct any damaged range improvements to pre-implementation conditions	Protect investment
41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a passable route (approximately 24 inches wide) is maintained on decommissioned routes to allow for livestock herding and movement within range allotments. • Ensure that permittees are informed of prescribed burning plans and areas prior to implementation. • Based on livestock/range permit management, additional site-specific coordination or protection requirements for prescribed fire treatments may be implemented. 	Minimize impacts to permitted livestock activities