

3.9 Visual Resource Management

3.9.1 Introduction

Visual Resource Management classes (VRM) and the corresponding VRM objectives were established in the Chief Joseph MFP in 1981. The Proposed Action and all alternatives fall within areas managed under VRM Class III guidelines. The VRM Class III guidelines provide that management activities may be evident to the casual visitor; however, the activity should remain subordinate to the visual strength and natural character of the landscape.

A management activity may repeat the dominant qualities common in the landscape and may visually change the essential character of existing dominance factors in the landscape. However, these changes must be relatively small in scale and generally subordinate to the visual strength of the natural landscape.

All non-exempt resource management program actions that will modify the landform, water bodies, vegetation, and structures will comply with contrast rating directives.

Specific MFP Guidelines for Forest Management:

1. Clearcuts may be seen but must simulate typical natural openings. No geometric shapes are allowed. Size shall not be greater than 50 acres.
2. Shelterwood or selective logging, with a maximum cut of 60 percent are a modification of textural contrast. Therefore, resulting openings appear natural. They shall not exceed a 60 percent cut. Some feathering may be necessary to meet class objectives.

Class III guidelines for roads are that roads should be partially concealed by vegetation follow natural landforms and should be seeded as soon as possible.

Analysis Methods

The BLM no longer uses a numeric contrast rating system as described in the MFP. Instead the BLM now uses ratings of Strong, Moderate, Weak, and None for the contrast rating system (BLM Handbook H-8431-1).

The first step is to select Key Observation Points (KOPs). This is along commonly traveled routes or other likely observation points. Factors that influence KOPs are angle of observation, number of viewers, length of time area is in view, and season of use. KOPs for the project area are the American River road, the Ericson Ridge road, the Mother Lode Hill Road, and the Flat Iron Ridge road. Most of the project area is not viewable from KOPs.

Prior to completing the contrast rating, visual simulations of the proposed treatment activities viewable from the KOPs were prepared using two methods. Photographs of similar post treatment areas were obtained and the Forest Vegetation Simulator was used to model treatments. This output was then used in the Forest Visualization System to produce graphic representations of the proposed treatments. See Appendix K for KOP photo and FVS output.

Contrast ratings were then completed from the KOPs. A rating matrix is used to rate the degree of contrast by looking at basic features (i.e., landform/water, vegetation, and structures) and basic elements (i.e., for line, color, and texture). The impacts were evaluated considering a 5-year recovery period following the end of the project Class III areas can have a moderate contrast rating.

3.9.2 Indicator–Class III Visual Resource Objective

Existing Condition

Landforms within the project area are generally representative of the physiographic area. Rolling, forested hills intersected by perennial and intermittent streams, with small open meadows and glades form the basis of the landscape. The landscape type is common throughout the region. Typical views from ridge tops include foreground, middle ground, and background images. From valleys and river banks, the typical view is primarily foreground with occasional middle ground images.

Lines in the landscape are generally horizontal in nature, formed by the shape of the hills and differences in vegetative concentration and composition.

Vegetation is predominately lodgepole pine with interspersed Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch. Riparian zones and meadows are generally grassy with shrubs. Various shades of green are the predominant color with an increasing incidence of browns due to high numbers of dead and dying lodgepole pine.

The natural texture of the vegetation is coarse in the foreground, evolving to smooth texture in the middle and background areas. Ridgeline Douglas-firs provide a bit of textural contrast in background areas.

The natural landscape in the area has been extensively modified with numerous roads, structures, mining activities, and forest management activities occurring on private and NPNF lands adjacent to the project area. The extent of these modifications are an indication that visitor sensitivity to change in the visual landscape is low, and acceptance to visual change in the landscape is high. Travel corridors in the project area are mainly along the stream and river system, limiting the amount of proposed activities that would be visible from high traffic areas. To date little road development has occurred on BLM administered lands and forest management has been confined to private and NPNF lands.

Environmental Effects

The size and position of fuels and vegetation treatments are an element to consider in contrast rating for visual resources. Direct effects result from the amount of vegetation removed, logging methods and roads constructed.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under the “no action” alternative, the vegetation and fuel conditions would continue to change albeit in a different fashion than if an action alternative is implemented. Due to the mountain pine beetle infestation, most of these stands will continue to experience high mortality. With increasing numbers of dead lodgepole pine the vegetation will change as will the color and texture across the landscape. This has already created a moderate contrast (begins to attract attention, and begins to dominate the characteristic landscape) from several of the KOPs as shown in Figure 3.9.1.



Figure 3.9.1 VRM American River–Flat Iron Ridge Road Point, Looking WSW Towards Alamance Mine

The changing fuel conditions would make the area more susceptible to fires that would consume a large amount of the vegetation (see Section 3.1 Fire and Fuels). If such an event were to occur, there would be a strong contrast across the landscape. The altered vegetation would be dominant and become the natural character of the landscape.

Alternatives B, C, and D

The alternatives are similar in the direct effects. This is due in part because of the proximity of treatment areas to the KOPs.

The proposed project would result in moderate to low contrast between the project actions and the existing landscape. Line, color, and texture would be affected to varying degrees. From the KOP on the Mother Lode road and the Ericson Ridge road, the action alternatives would affect foreground, middle ground, and background visuals. From KOPs on American River and Flatiron Ridge, the foreground and occasionally the background visuals would be affected. The impacts of the action alternatives are judged to be moderate to low and within the guidelines of the MFP.

Removing up to 60% of the existing forest cover would change the texture of the visual landscape in the project area, with less canopy and more open viewing. Foreground areas would be most visible (see Figure 3.9.2), but would remain coarse in texture. Middle ground and background area would be more coarse, but the contrast would be less noticeable if cuts are feathered to reduce sharp changes in lines and geometric patterns. See Figure 3.9.3 for an example of the middle ground visual with similar treatment.

Color would not change significantly, although greater open canopy areas would result in varied shades of green with fewer browns.



Figure 3.9.2 Foreground example



Figure 3.9.3 Middle ground example

Temporary roads and skid trails within the project area would be located so that they are substantially hidden from view, and new construction would be put to bed upon completion of the project. Therefore structural contrast is considered low.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Effects–Visual Resource Management

Common to All Alternatives

No irreversible commitments are proposed under any of the alternatives. Visual vegetation changes due to tree mortality and loss of other vegetation due to wildfire would be irretrievable but not irreversible as trees and other plant life would regenerate over time. The same is true of the visual vegetation changes due to vegetation and fuels treatments.

Cumulative Effects–Visual Resource Management

The cumulative effects area for Visual Resource Management is the viewsheds adjoining the Eastside Project. Because the natural landscape has already been significantly modified in and around the project area, cumulative impacts are difficult to assess. Existing human-caused modification on adjacent lands renders the contrasts of the proposed project less noticeable than if they were to occur in a natural landscape, and each successive project could be considered to reduce the contrast even further, eventually changing the landscape character completely. The NPNF American and Crooked River project, which adjoins the Eastside Project area, identified that all proposed activities were consistent with the Forest Plan standards for visual quality (USDA-FS, 2005a). The Eastside Project units were designed to maintain an acceptable contrast rating according to MFP guidance; therefore, the project would not contribute substantially to the visual decline in landscape character.

3.10 Cultural Resources

3.10.1 Introduction

3.10.1.1 *Scope of the Analysis*

Several analyses were completed to evaluate cultural resources in the analysis area. Consultation was initiated with the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department regarding identification of any cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties in the analysis area. Research of available documentation was conducted regarding the prehistory and the history of the analysis area. A cultural resource inventory was conducted to identify historic properties in the area of potential effect. Identified properties were evaluated for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places and project design measures were initiated to prevent an adverse effect. Consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department continues throughout the project development and consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been completed.

3.10.1.2 *Regulatory Framework*

Cultural resources are managed under a variety of Federal laws. Specifically, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, and amendments, requires federal agencies take into account the effect of the undertaking on any site that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Implementation of Section 106 is codified under 36 CFR 800. A cultural resource inventory is completed; resource eligibility evaluated in consultation with the SHPO; and potential impacts evaluated in consultation with the SHPO. A state protocol agreement between the BLM and the Idaho SHPO regarding the manner, in which the BLM will meet its responsibilities under the NHPA, as provided for in the National Programmatic Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, is followed. These cultural resource data are incorporated into National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) documents.

Cultural resource information is also gathered and coordination completed through the Government-to-Government relationship with the Nez Perce Tribe that is based on the trust relationship created from treaties. Treaties are negotiated contracts made pursuant to the Constitution of the United States. Coordination and consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe is also carried out under other federal laws or orders including the NHPA, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites; and Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.

3.10.1.3 *Analysis Methods*

The area of potential effect (APE) was identified which is considered the treatment units, proposed roads/trails, bridges, landings, and restoration actions for all alternatives. Review of existing cultural resource data was then initiated. Reference materials were examined to develop a historical context for the analysis area. The Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department was contacted regarding identification of any known cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties. A cultural resource inventory was conducted covering the treatment units, landings, bridges, proposed roads/trails (both treatment and restoration), and restoration projects. Cultural resources were recorded on standard Archaeological Survey of Idaho Site Inventory Forms. All sites were photographed and the majority GPSed and recorded on USGS 1:24,000 scale maps. Proposed project treatments were then compared to site locations, and in the majority of cases, sites were avoided by project design. Project design measures were developed to achieve no adverse effect on those sites that could not be completely avoided. The results of the inventory were presented to the SHPO and the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department. Consultation was completed with the SHPO regarding the results of the inventory and design measures developed to achieve no adverse effect. The SHPO has concurred with the finding of no adverse effect.

3.10.2 Existing Condition

Cultural resources have generally been characterized as having a physical presence on the landscape (i.e., archeological site, cabin, etc.), but this definition has gradually changed to include Traditional Cultural Properties. A brief cultural context is presented to create a basic understanding of the types of cultural resources present in the analysis area.

The annual cycle of the Nez Perce is reflected by their subsistence economy. The canyon settings were primarily used in the winter from October to early spring. In the early and late spring, the Nez Perce were found utilizing the drainage systems of the tributaries leading in the major river systems such as the Snake, Salmon, and Clearwater rivers. When the roots matured large groups of people could concentrate in an area to harvest the crop, usually in early summer. By August, the Nez Perce would often break into smaller groups and move into more mountainous terrain before returning to the canyons around October. A wide variety of plants and animals were used. Marshall (1977) has summarized the seasonal use of areas and provides lists of resources used.

Prehistoric use in this area is extremely hard to determine since many prehistoric sites have been destroyed by historic mining activity or are possibly located on private land. In 1976, Wanda Jo Gallaher conducted an archaeological reconnaissance of the Elk City township and recorded two sites known to have been used historically by the Nez Perce. These include a camp site and the Nez Perce Trail, which was later used as the Elk City Wagon Road (Gallaher, 1976:39–40). The two sites reflect two primary uses of the township. The first was the utilization of numerous food resources on a seasonal basis, and second was as a trail route on their way via the Nez Perce Trail to the plains to hunt buffalo (Gallaher, 1976:13).

Gallaher (1976) provides a detailed summary of the historical development of Elk City. The EuroAmerican history of the Elk City area begins in May 1861 when gold was discovered. Until 1863, all placering was done manually with a pan, a sluice box, or a rocker, and production was relatively low. With the introduction of hydraulics, production was greatly increased. In order to operate these hydraulic giants on the relatively level ground, an extensive ditch system was needed. In 1872 there was a rush of Chinese into the area that bought mining claims from the remaining EuroAmerican miners, worked the “skim diggings” and even profitably reworked some of the tailing dumps. The era of the Chinese miners came to a close in 1887 when a judge ruled it was illegal for aliens to hold mining claims in this area (Elsensohn, 1970).

To break down the gold-bearing deposits, there had to be sufficient supply of water. Water was transported to the mine via ditches and flumes. The water could be directly diverted from a creek to a ditch or a ditch could begin at a dam that was built to store the water. A ditch was dug down into the soil on the contour of the slope. The water was carried directly to the mine or sometimes to a reservoir above the mine through the ditch. The water was then carried in a pipe from the ditch or reservoir directly to the mine under great pressure. At the end of the pipe was a hydraulic giant which was used to wash the gold-bearing deposits into a sluice box with riffles to catch the gold.

The first quartz vein to be developed was called the Buster in 1884 (Shiach et al. 1903:445). Many others were soon developed. In the 1890s dredging was attempted with varying degrees of success (Shiach et al. 1903:445). Successful dredging operations didn't occur until the 1930s which continued through the late 1950s.

The cultural resource inventory has documented 54 sites in the analysis area with the majority related to historic mining. The sites are generally characterized by major features such as hydraulic mine cutbanks, tailing piles, ditches, reservoirs, rock walls, shafts, adits, dredge tailings, etc. Several sites with collapsed cabins or foundations and several trails were located. Several historic artifact scatters were also located. No prehistoric sites were discovered. One Chinese site was located which is affiliated with hydraulic mining.

Fifty sites meet criteria 36 CFR 60.4(a) "... that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; ..." and criteria 36 CFR 60.4 (d) "... that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history." for eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places. The sites represent the mining phase of Idaho history. There are sites that depict hydraulic mining and information on mining techniques may be gleaned from studying the construction of the dams, the arrangement of the tailing piles, and cutbanks. The shafts and adits reflect lode mining activity. Information on mining techniques may be gleaned from studying the arrangement and construction of the ditches. The primary value that ditches can provide comes from their location (that can be mapped with a GPS unit), and the construction method (that can be gleaned from measurements and cross-sections). Dredge piles have marginal values with the undisturbed tailing piles potentially indicating the techniques that led to their deposition which can be documented with photographs, measurements, and GPS units. Most of the sites date from the late 1800s to the early 1900s with several representing the 1930s to 1950s mining activity. There is potential for information in the archeological deposits and some information can still be gleaned from the remaining structures or habitation sites.

Four sites are determined not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. They consist of two separate scatters of historic artifacts, a short segment of road, and a small section of stage road severely modified and currently used as an access road on private land. These sites do not possess information that can contribute to our understanding of history.

3.10.3 Environmental Effects

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under this alternative no project actions would be undertaken. Therefore, there will be no effect to cultural resources. Cultural sites will continue to naturally deteriorate.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Project design measures were developed to achieve a no effect or no adverse effect for cultural sites in the APE. The majority of sites were avoided with a buffer of 10 meters placed around all those sites. Only two types of sites could not be avoided: ditches and dredge piles. On the occasion that these sites could not be avoided, design features for ditches and dredge piles would be implemented (see Table 2.2.2). Treatment activities would be completed over snow in units 34 and 35 to protect cultural values. There is potential for indirect effects by increased use of the area by contractors which could lead to removal of artifacts. Those artifacts with the greatest chance of being removed will be systematically collected prior to initiation of the project.

3.10.4 Cumulative Effects

Only two cultural feature types will be impacted from this project. Two ditches will be affected by road construction and several portions of dredge piles may be impacted by road construction or bridge construction. To evaluate the cumulative effects of the proposal, all historic mining ditches that transported water to mining operations (ditches within the actual hydraulic mine were not included) that cross through the APE were included. If the ditch extended out of the APE, and if data were available, the entire length of the ditch was included. The total length of all ditches amounts to 7.26 miles (38,331 feet). Within the APE about 525 feet of ditch would be affected; that accounts for 1.4% of the total.

Several areas of dredge tailing piles may be impacted by proposed new roads or ATV trails that would be used to reroute vehicle use from the road immediately adjacent to American River to these new roads/trails. All actions are part of the restoration effort. The total area of dredge piles in the APE amounts to 124,123 yd². About 1,292 yd² may be impacted over the entire project area which accounts for about 1% of the total amount of recorded tailings in the APE.

Cumulative effect to the ditches and dredge tailings is considered no adverse effect. Information gained from the documentation of the features recovers available data.

3.10.5 Irreversible or Irretrievable Effects

No irreversible or irretrievable effects are anticipated.

3.11 Tribal Trust and Treaty Rights

3.11.1 Introduction

3.11.1.1 *Scope of Analysis*

The Nez Perce Tribe was consulted to gather information regarding potential issues in the analysis area. The analysis area is within the original Nez Perce territory. Consultation was initiated specifically with the Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Department regarding identification of any cultural resources or Traditional Cultural Properties in the analysis area. The Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resource Subcommittee has also been consulted.

3.11.1.2 *Regulatory Framework*

On June 11, 1855, the Nez Perce Tribe and the United States signed the Treaty with the Nez Percés, 1855, (12 Stat. 957). The Tribe relinquished ownership of millions of acres of land to the United States. The treaty also guaranteed a permanent homeland for the Tribe, which became known as the Nez Perce Reservation. Article 3 of the treaty states:

“The exclusive right of taking fish in all the streams where running through or bordering on said reservation is further secured to said Indians; as also the right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed places in common with citizens of the Territory; and of erecting temporary buildings for curing, together with the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries, and pasturing their horses and cattle upon open and unclaimed land.”

This article of the treaty has direct applicability to natural resource management actions by the BLM. Under this article, the rights to fish, hunt, and gather are maintained by the Tribe and hence, natural resource management decisions then potentially affect treaty rights. The analysis area lies immediately to the east of the 1855 treaty boundary and is well within the aboriginal territory as described in the Indian Court of Claims (Chalfant, 1974). In the early 1860s gold was discovered on the Nez Perce Reservation. This ultimately led to a new treaty. The 1863 treaty dated June 9, 1863 (14 Stat. 647), titled Treaty with the Nez Percés, 1863, greatly reduced the 1855 reservation boundary.

Treaties are negotiated contracts made pursuant to the Constitution of the United States. Coordination and consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe is also carried out under other federal laws or orders including the NHPA, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites; and Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.

Treaties ensured that Native American rights were reserved to maintain their culture as well as provide for physical subsistence activities. These rights are often referred to as trust responsibilities and include hunting, fishing, and gathering rights. Therefore, the totality of the entire area takes on importance not only for the physical subsistence aspect but also for the socio-cultural well being of the cultural group.

3.11.1.3 *Analysis Methods*

Resource information is gathered and coordination completed through the Government-to-Government relationship with the Nez Perce Tribe that is based on the trust relationship created from treaties. Natural and cultural resource data are compiled and analyzed in this document.

3.11.2 Existing Conditions

The existing conditions of various resources are described under their own sections in this document. When addressing overall resource condition it is important to also understand that this has implications for Native American subsistence use that includes gathering or hunting for food, as well as gathering medicinal resources, and craft materials. This is done in a landscape that often has spiritual meaning, not

only for the collected physical resources, but also the landforms where this activity takes place, in addition to the actual activity associated with this action. All landforms, soil, plants, animals, and water are interconnected and so the entire ecosystem must be analyzed to more fully understand the condition of all culturally related resources. No TCPs or other resource procurement areas have been identified by the Tribe that could be affected by any of the action alternatives.

3.11.3 Environmental Effects

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Under this alternative no project actions would be undertaken. No harvest activities or restoration projects proposed under this project would be completed. Existing riparian and aquatic habitats along some stream segments will remain in poor to fair condition.

Alternatives B, C, and D

All action alternatives will support upward trends for riparian/aquatic habitats within the American River watershed. Existing riparian and aquatic habitats along some stream segments are currently in poor to fair condition. These restoration actions will support trends toward fair to good condition in the long term.

Temporary road construction will increase in the number of roads available to access areas to procure resources. Since the roads are all temporary and some existing roads will be obliterated, there will be fewer roads available for access after project completion.

Irreversible or Irretrievable Effects

No irreversible or irretrievable effects are anticipated.

3.12 Grazing

3.12.1 Existing Environment

Grazing Allotment Profiles

The American River (36173) and Kirks Fork (36261) Allotments are located in the Elk City township. The Northern Idaho Grazing EIS (1981) Record of Decision, and North Idaho Range Management Program (1988) established the following on the two allotments:

Table 3.12.1 Allotments Established by the North Idaho Range Management Program (1988)

Allotment Name	Allotment Number	Allotment Category	Allotment Acres	Season of Use	Livestock AUMs
American River	36173	Custodial	487	6/15–10/1	15
Kirks Fork	36261	Maintain	1,314	7/1–10/1	45

The American River allotment is located 3.0 air miles north of Elk City, Idaho. The allotment is currently leased and is predominantly forested with an inter-dispersion of perennial grasses. The current forage production on the allotment is 15 animal unit months (AUMs).

The Kirks Fork Allotment is located 1.0 air mile east of Elk City, Idaho. The allotment is currently leased and is predominantly forested with an inter-dispersion of perennial grasses. The current forage production on the allotment is 46 AUMs. The current carrying capacity on the American River allotment is 32 acres/AUM and on the Kirks Fork allotment it is 25 acres/AUM.

3.12.2 Environmental Effects

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The no-action alternative would have a negative impact upon grazing management. The overstory reduces the amount of herbaceous vegetation produced and available for livestock and wildlife. In addition, as the dead trees fall, access through the allotments becomes very limited to livestock.

There would be potential consequences to the grazing use of the two allotments should wildfire occur within the project area. Impacts would be relative to the extent of the fire and the intensity, which would likely be higher if fuels continue to accumulate through no action. Burned areas on BLM land are closed to grazing a minimum of two growing seasons post-fire to allow for vegetative recovery. Should the entire allotment burn, it would be closed in its entirety. When the allotment is again available for grazing there could be a temporary increase in forage until the trees begin to shade out the forage species. This increased forage may be available for as long as 15 years. The forage would then decrease to current levels unless management or fire again opens the canopy. Unplanned wildfire is difficult for livestock lessees as it immediately impacts their operations and does not allow time to adjust livestock numbers or make other arrangements for grazing.

Alternatives B, C, and D

The American River and Kirks Fork allotments could be partially closed to livestock grazing during the logging, site preparation, restoration, and reforestation activities. When logging and site preparation are not active; livestock grazing may continue to be authorized as long as it does not conflict with the project. After reforestation and restoration is complete, livestock grazing would be restricted for two growing seasons so that saplings and seeded areas can be established. It is anticipated that there will be long-term benefits (15 years) for livestock as the result of the project because of the additional forage produced and improved access. It is estimated that the additional forage created through timber harvest would be available for 15 years following reforestation before it is lost through plant succession. In addition, forage

production is estimated to become 2–6 acres per AUM during the 15 year period. Currently the carrying capacity on the American River allotment is 32 acres/AUM, and on the Kirks Fork allotment is 25 acres/AUM.

3.12.3 Cumulative Effect

There would be no cumulative impacts on the two grazing lessees.

3.13 Socio Economic

3.13.1 Introduction

Idaho County is the largest county in Idaho and has an estimated population of 15,000 people. The Interior Columbia River Basin Ecosystem Management Project released a report on the economic and social conditions of 543 upper Columbia River Basin communities (Harris et al., 1996). The study reviewed several factors impacting the economies of these communities. The study found that many communities were strongly influenced by the amount of public land within a 20-mile radius and that their employment base tended to be more agriculture, wood products, mining or federal Government. Elk City is considered an isolated community and 98% of the land within a 20-mile radius is federally managed (Harris et al., 1996).

Recreation-based industry could not be quantified by Harris et al. (1996). Given its location, it can be assumed that Elk City is a key access point for back country travelers to portions of the Selway-Bitterroot, Gospel Hump and Frank Church wilderness areas as well as the Cove-Mallard and other roadless areas. It also attracts substantial numbers of hunters each fall.

With wood products its second highest employment specialization, Elk City is classed as a resource dependant community (Harris et al., 1996). That Elk City is virtually surrounded by federally managed land, it is easily discernable that they are dependant on Federal resource management, particularly Federal timber harvest. The Bennett Forest Industries saw mill is within the analysis area. It currently employs 115 people and provides an annual payroll of \$4.7 million plus associated contract loggers and truckers (Bennett, 2002). However, citing a lack of a reasonable priced log supply from Federal lands, the milling operation will be closed and relocated to Grangeville in early 2006 (Idaho County Free Press, December 18, 2002).

3.13.1.1 *Scope of the Analysis*

The economic analysis for the Eastside Project will focus on those costs and revenues associated with implementation of each of the proposed alternatives. The purpose of the economic analysis is to display potential costs and revenues associated with implementation of the alternatives for comparison purposes.

3.13.1.2 *Analysis Methods*

Economic conditions are constantly changing and the prices and costs used for this analysis are a “snapshot” in time, but they do provide a standardized method to compare the impacts of each alternative. A weighted average delivered log price based on the median for each species of current prices being paid for logs delivered to the Bennett Forest Industries mill in Grangeville was used for this analysis. These prices should remain static until June 2006 (Glen Poxlitner, BFI, personal communication). This price source was chosen as it is the closest processing facility to the project area.

The direct impact of the project on local employment was assessed using an IMPLAN model and is displayed in Table 3.13.2. IMPLAN is an economic impact assessment modeling system that allows the user to estimate employment and other changes resulting from various management decisions.

3.13.1.3 *Direct and Indirect Effects*

Long-term and cumulative effects of individual projects are difficult to quantify. Private lands will continue to produce forest products, but the rate of harvest is largely dependent on the landowner’s circumstances and is unpredictable.

3.13.2 Indicator 1—Local Employment

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Local employment could be directly or indirectly impacted by the No Action Alternative. Based upon IMPLAN analysis summarized in Table 3.13.2 the project would help support 227-245 jobs. In the short term, the No Action Alternative does not provide this direct support, possibly jeopardizing local employment opportunities.

In the long term the lodgepole pine in the analysis area is experiencing continuing mortality from mountain pine beetle. Stand exams completed in 2004 show that 30 to 50 percent of the mature trees are dead and mortality rates are 20–30% per year (see Section 3.3 Vegetation). Table 3.13.1 displays the sawlog harvest volume and percent of lodgepole pine by alternative.

Table 3.13.1 A.C. Sawlog Harvest and Lodgepole Pine Volume by Alternative

Alternative	Total Volume (MMBF)	Lodgepole Pine (MMBF)	Percent of Volume
B	9.705	6.623	68
C	11.104	8.034	72
D	10.467	7.537	72

No action results indirectly in a lost opportunity for commercial timber harvest for at least 60 years on much of the project area. This would be the time required for the next generation to establish and grow to commercial size. The indirect effect would be the lost employment potential of the current forest stands. If a stand replacing fire should occur, the timeframe for the maturity of the next generation would be extended. The length of the delay to maturity would depend on when the fire(s) occurred and the extent of the fire(s).

Alternatives B, C, and D

Local employment would be directly impacted by all action alternatives. Employment opportunities that may result from project implementation include:

- restoration activities (watershed, riparian, mine site, roads, etc)
- fuel reduction
- forest product (including harvest, transportation and milling)
- reforestation
- road construction

Table 3.13.2 provides a summary of the potential jobs related to each phase of project implementation based on IMPLAN analysis.

Table 3.13.2 Direct Employment Effects

Project Type	Alt B	Alt C	Alt D
Restoration/Reforestation	18	18	18
Hazardous Fuel Reduction	11	11	10
Forest Products	196	212	196
Road Construction	5	4	3
Total Jobs	230	245	227

Secondary economic activity would also be supported indirectly through implementation of any action alternative. This would be related to suppliers of equipment and fuel, repairs, lodging, etc.

Stewardship contracting is an implementation tool that is available for project implementation. During the scoping process with the public and the Nez Perce Tribe, implementing portions of the project under stewardship authorities was discussed and supported. Stewardship guidance, particularly for NFP fuel reduction projects, provides an emphasis for local hiring, the use of local contractors, and providing local training opportunities. This results in potentially more direct local income and job benefits than standard service and timber sale contracting and, through the training opportunities, can create a labor pool for continued employment opportunities.

3.13.3 Indicator 2—Revenues and Costs

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The No Action Alternative, by foregoing implementation of timber harvest and the development and restoration package, would result in no change to the current revenue production or expenditures.

Alternatives B, C, and D

The implementation of any action alternative has the potential to affect associated revenue and costs. Lodgepole pine represents 68–72 percent of the available sawlog volume across the three action alternatives. With the annual rate of mortality expected to be 20–30 percent, the loss of potential revenue is quite high. The available volume figures are from stand exams completed in 2004 and represent the current available harvest volume. This will change with the continuing mortality, but the relative comparisons presented will remain valid. The top portion of Tables 3.13.3–3.13.5 display the revenue and costs associated with the harvest activities and the bottom portion displays the restoration activity and its associated cost. This information provides an estimate only and can be used as a relative comparison tool of the economic impact of each alternative.

Table 3.13.3 Revenue and Costs of Implementation—Alternative B—Proposed Action

Item	Cost/Unit	Units	Costs	Revenue
Vegetation/Fuels Treatment Activities				
Delivered Log Price	\$345	9,705.0		\$3,351,130
Tractor Logging (mbf)	\$165	6,757.0	\$1,114,905	
Cable/Skyline Logging (mbf)	\$200	2,386.0	\$477,200	
Helicopter Logging (mbf)	\$325	562.0	\$182,650	
Underburn Fuels (acre)	\$491	340.0	\$166,940	
Broadcast Burn Fuels (acre)	\$480	140.0	\$67,200	
Excavator Pile & Burn (acre)	\$278	770.0	\$214,060	
Hand Pile & Burn (acre)	\$450	54.0	\$24,300	
Reforestation (acre)	\$490	470.0	\$230,300	
Temporary Road Construction & Decomm. (miles)	\$13,000	15.1	\$196,300	
Road Improvement (miles)	\$2,700	2.4	\$6,480	
Subtotal—Treatment Activities			\$2,668,335	\$3,351,130
Restoration Activities				
Road Decommissioning (miles)	\$6,945	1.9	\$13,196	
Watershed Road Improvements (miles)	\$3,934		\$0	
New Permanent Road (miles)	\$99,000	0.6	\$59,400	
New Automobile River Crossing (Bridge)	\$90,000	0.0	\$0	
Queen Creek—American River Re-connect	\$30,692	1.0	\$30,692	
Number of sites of Watershed Trail Improvements ⁵	\$31,350	2.0	\$62,700	
Stream Crossing Improvements	\$5,173	2.0	\$10,346	
Riparian Planting (miles)	\$21,818	4.8	\$104,726	
Stream Bank Re-contour (miles)	\$30,045	1.2	\$36,054	
Recreation and Trail improvements (miles)	\$6,652	0.2	\$1,330	
Access Change (road to trail—miles)	\$10,000	1.6	\$16,000	
Mine Site Reclamation (acres)	\$20,045	0.5	\$10,023	
Subtotal—Restoration Activities			\$344,467	0
Subtotal			\$3,024,802	
Net Revenue				\$326,328

Table 3.13.4 Revenue and Costs of Implementation–Alternative C

Item	Cost/Unit	Units	Costs	Revenue
Vegetation/Fuels Treatment Activities				
Delivered Log Price	\$343	11,104.0		\$3,805,405
Tractor Logging (mbf)	\$165	5,335.0	\$880,275	
Cable/Skyline Logging (mbf)	\$200	1,209.0	\$241,800	
Helicopter Logging (mbf)	\$325	4,560.0	\$1,482,000	
Underburn Fuels (acre)	\$491	469.0	\$230,279	
Broadcast Burn Fuels (acre)	\$480	0.0	\$0	
Excavator Pile & Burn (acre)	\$278	767.0	\$213,226	
Hand Pile & Burn (acre)	\$450	54.0	\$24,300	
Reforestation (acre)	\$490	470.0	\$230,300	
Temporary Road Construction & Decomm. (miles)	\$13,000	10.5	\$136,500	
Road Improvement (miles)	\$2,700	2.4	\$6,480	
Subtotal–Treatment Activities			\$3,445,160	\$3,805,405
Restoration Activities				
Road Decommissioning (miles)	\$6,945	3.0	\$20,696	
Watershed Road Improvements (miles)	\$3,934		\$0	
New Permanent Road (miles)	\$99,000	1.1	\$108,900	
New Automobile River Crossing (Bridge)	\$90,000	1.0	\$90,000	
Queen Creek–American River Re-connect	\$30,692	1.0	\$30,692	
Number of sites of Watershed Trail Improvements	\$31,350	2.0	\$62,700	
Stream Crossing Improvements	\$5,173	3.0	\$15,519	
Riparian Planting (miles)	\$21,818	4.8	\$104,726	
Stream Bank Re-contour (miles)	\$30,045	1.2	\$36,054	
Recreation and Trail improvements (miles)	\$6,652	0.2	\$1,330	
Access Change (road to trail–miles)	\$10,000	1.6	\$16,000	
Mine Site Reclamation (acres)	\$20,045	0.5	\$10,023	
Subtotal–Restoration Activities			\$496,640	0
Subtotal			\$3,941,800	
Net Revenue				(\$136,395)

Table 3.13.5 Revenue and Costs of Implementation–Alternative D

Item	Cost/Unit	Units	Costs	Revenue
Vegetation/Fuels Treatment Activities				
Delivered Log Price	\$343	10,467		\$3,585,850
Tractor Logging (mbf)	\$165	6,527	\$1,076,955	
Cable/Skyline Logging (mbf)	\$200	1,209	\$241,800	
Helicopter Logging (mbf)	\$325	2,731	\$887,575	
Underburn Fuels (acre)	\$491	266	\$130,606	
Broadcast Burn Fuels (acre)	\$480	134	\$64,320	
Excavator Pile & Burn (acre)	\$278	726	\$201,828	
Hand Pile & Burn (acre)	\$450	43	\$19,350	
Reforestation (acre)	\$490	470	\$230,300	
Temporary Road Construction & Decomm. (miles)	\$13,000	10.7	\$139,100	
Road Improvement (miles)	\$2,700	2.1	\$5,670	
Subtotal–Treatment Activities			\$2,997,504	\$3,585,850
Restoration Activities				
Road Decommissioning (miles)	\$6,945	1.5	\$10,418	
Watershed Road Improvements (miles)	\$3,934	2.1	\$8,261	
New Permanent Road (miles)	\$99,000	0.6	\$59,400	
New Automobile River Crossing (Bridge)	\$90,000	1.0	\$90,000	
Queen Creek–American River Re-connect	\$30,692	1.0	\$30,692	
Number of sites of Watershed Trail Improvements	\$31,350	2.0	\$62,700	
Stream Crossing Improvements	\$5,173	1.0	\$5,173	
Riparian Planting (miles)	\$21,818	4.8	\$104,726	
Stream Bank Re-contour (miles)	\$30,045	0.8	\$24,036	
Recreation and Trail improvements (miles)	\$6,652	0.2	\$1,330	
Access Change (road to trail–miles)	\$10,000	2.6	\$26,000	
Mine Site Reclamation (acres)	\$20,045	0.5	\$10,023	
Subtotal–Restoration Activities			\$432,759	0
Subtotal			\$3,430,263	
Net Revenue				\$155,587

The information in Tables 3.13.3–3.13.5 displays that the net value (all implementation costs minus revenues) for Alternative B is \$326,328; Alternative C is (\$136,395); and Alternative D is \$155,587.

This shows that Alternative B and D would provide sufficient revenue to offset the implementation and restoration costs, while Alternative C would be expected to cost an additional \$136,395 to implement all proposed activities. With lodgepole pine a significant component of each action alternative (see Table 3.3.1) and its declining value due to beetle mortality, it is conceivable that Alternatives B and D would move closer to zero or negative value with time. Options that could be implemented to ensure revenue are sufficient to cover expenses include dropping some higher costing harvest methods (helicopter), reducing the area that would be reforested with a different seral mix, or delaying implementation of restoration actions in excess of those needed to support an upward trend.

3.13.4 Indicator 3–Other Economic Effects

Common to All Alternatives

Grazing and recreation-based services also provide economic inputs to the local economy, but they are very minor relative to the values of the forest products and restoration treatments. Current grazing levels and recreation-based economic activities would not be appreciably affected by implementation of any alternative.

3.13.5 Indicator 4–Environmental Justice

Common to All Alternatives

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Through scoping, public and collaborative meetings, the public and local residents have had a voice in developing alternatives and have been thoroughly informed of potential environmental consequences.

The analysis area is within the ceded territory of the Nez Perce Tribe. Consideration on the impacts to Native Americans can be found in Section 3.11 (Tribal Trust and Treaty Rights). The Tribe was also kept fully involved in project development through meetings with the Natural Resources Subcommittee and specialist to specialist dialogue. No environmental health hazards have been identified resulting from project implementation. The project should not disproportionately affect income levels.

3.14 Recreation

3.14.1 Introduction

Recreational use within the project area is heavily influenced by the presence of the existing transportation system and land ownership pattern. Dispersed recreation is predominant. Primary recreation activities in the area are hunting, fishing, ATV trail riding, and snowmobiling. Other activities include picking berries and mushrooms, cross country skiing, and viewing wildlife and fisheries. Swimming and picnicking are also popular activities along the American River near the Alamance Mine Site. Motorized and non-motorized trail use is increasing. ATV use is increasing in popularity on the trail system in this area. Non-motorized uses remain relatively consistent, with light to moderate numbers of local and out-of-area recreational users during the summer and fall seasons. Most recreation users are from north central Idaho, although in the fall, a significant percentage of hunters are from out-of-state or other parts of Idaho.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes and the corresponding ROS objectives were established in the Chief Joseph MFP in 1981. The Proposed Action and all alternatives fall within areas managed for Rural and Roaded Natural recreation opportunities.

Roaded Natural ROS areas include moderate evidence of human modification. Surface and vegetative modifications are common. Constructed roads and highways are present. Structures are generally scattered, remaining visually subordinate. Structures may include small reservoirs, power lines, microwave installations, etc. Recreation facilities are generally small and rustic. The number of encounters with other recreation users is low.

3.14.1.1 Analysis Methods

In the initial steps of project design ROS classes were reviewed for the project area as delineated in the MFP. Based upon the class, vegetation/fuels management treatments and aquatic restoration treatments were designed to be compatible.

Current recreational use areas (dispersed campsites), ATV use patterns, and highway vehicle use patterns are the baseline upon which potential impacts on recreational opportunities were evaluated. Recreation opportunities associated with dispersed activities such as hunting, fishing, camping and driving were used.

3.14.2 Indicator 1—Resource Opportunity Spectrum Class

3.14.2.1 Existing Condition

The entire project area is managed under Roaded Natural or Rural guidelines as described in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. Recreation activities include big game hunting, driving for pleasure, and various motorized and non-motorized trail uses. The Elk City township is a combination of BLM, and private lands. It is a rural, pastoral setting, with a small town within a remote, forested landscape. Elk City has become a destination on driving tours primarily from the Selway basin and along the Elk City Wagon Road. The Elk City Dust Devils is a local ATV club with over 100 members, many from outside the area (Evetts, 2005).

3.14.2.2 Environmental Effects

Direct and Indirect

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Classifications identified in the MFP for the project area would remain unchanged by the “no action” alternative.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Visitors traveling in the American River watershed could encounter a very slight increase in traffic. Noise and dust from proposed treatment activities would have a short term temporary impact on recreation visitors. Minor, temporary changes to the recreational experience are expected from project activities which occur in the vicinity of popular use areas or along roads and trails. Frequency of contact would increase in those areas currently not adjacent to existing roads as temporary access roads are used. Permanent changes on the type of access available will result in a change in recreation activities and use patterns along the American River.

The transportation system would be altered by road decommissioning, ford closures, ATV bridge construction and changes in highway vehicle use to ATV trails with the action alternatives. Current highway vehicle access to areas of relatively high use, e.g. the Alamance Mine and the area near the upper American River Ford will be restricted, and may reduce the number of visitors at these sites. Reducing the amount of highway vehicle access could create an increased sense of remoteness for users in some areas; however contact with other users on main travel routes would continue to be common.

Although there will be some effects to recreational experiences resulting from the action alternatives, the effects will not be substantial enough to alter the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Classifications identified in the MFP for the project area.

3.14.2.3 Cumulative Effects

The NPNF is implementing the American and Crooked River Project adjacent to the Eastside Project area. They used a similar classification system and categorize 97 percent of their project area Roaded Natural (USDA-FS, 2005a). Their project will not alter the ROS class. Cumulative effects are therefore the same as the direct and indirect effects at a broader scale.

3.14.3 Indicator 2—Recreational Activities

The project area is a popular big game hunting area for elk, moose, deer and bear. The roads along the American River are popular for sight seeing and dispersed camping. American River contains rainbow, cutthroat, brook and bull trout; steelhead, and spring and summer chinook salmon. Most dispersed use visitors are self-contained. Dispersed camp sites are scattered along open roads.

3.14.3.1 Environmental Effects

Direct and Indirect

Alternative A (No Action Alternative)

The recreation uses would remain unchanged by the “no action” alternative.

Alternatives B, C, and D

Visitors traveling in the American River watershed could encounter a very slight increase in traffic. Visitors would notice a short term increase in dust and noise from the proposed activity. Anglers along American River could be temporarily displaced by the proposed project, due to traffic, noise and/or watershed restoration actions. Hunters could also be displaced by activities associated with the action alternatives or encounter different conditions for several seasons. The quality of experience of campers in the American River watershed could be reduced by increased activity during the implementation of the

proposed actions. The road along the American River in the south portion of the project would no longer be accessible to highway vehicles and may affect visitor numbers. Many of the vegetation/fuels treatment areas may become snowmobile play areas for several years until trees become taller.

Alternatives C, and D

The road along the American River in the north portion of the project would no longer be accessible to highway vehicles, which may affect the number of visitors.

3.14.2.4 Cumulative Effects

The NPNF is implementing the American and Crooked River Project adjacent to the Eastside Project area. Cumulative effects are therefore the same as the direct and indirect effects at a broader scale.

Chapter 4. Consultation and Coordination

4.1 List of Preparers

Name	Years Experience	Role/Responsibility	Education
Greg Yuncevich	28	Line officer	B.S., Wildlife Biology
Robbin Boyce	27	Silviculture, Fire/fuels	M.S., Silviculture/Fire Management and Ecology B.S., Forest Management
Mark Craig	23	Socio - Economic	B.S., Forest Management, minor in Business Administration
Kristen Sanders	17	Air Quality, Fire/fuels	M.S., Forestry/Fire Management B.S., Biology
Chuck Dillon	10	Geographic Information System	B.A., Geography Graduate work in GIS/Remote Sensing/Regional & City Planning
LeAnn Eno	17	Special Status Plants, Vegetation–Riparian and Wetlands	B.S./Biology Graduate work Botany and Plant Ecology
LuVerne Grussing	29	Recreation, Visual Resources	M.Ed., Recreation & Park Administration
Dean Huibregtse	26	Livestock Grazing	B.S., Range Management/ Wildlife Management
Craig Johnson	31	Special Status Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife	M.S., Range Resources B.S., Wildlife/Fisheries
Mark Lowry	21+	Special Status Plants, Vegetation, Riparian and Wetlands	B.S., Rangeland Resources
David Sisson	28	Cultural Resources, Indian Trust Resources and Tribal Treaty Rights	M.A., Interdisciplinary Studies B.S., Anthropology
Mike Stevenson	19	Soil Resources, Water Resources	B.S., Geology
Stephanie Snook	30	District Planning and Environmental Coordinator	

4.2 Distribution List for Final EIS

Private Individuals and Commercial Interests

Abbott, Peter Lynn
Bailey, Carolyn
Baldwin, Daniel A.
Bennett Forest Industries
Biggers, Larry
Blasch, Kyle
Bonnalie, Russell
Brando, Cathy
Chandler, Donald L.
Clapp, Douglas E.
Clements, Mike
Conboy, Michael A.
Denham, Joseph E.
Edwards, Ellen
Evans, Stanley R.
Gallaugh, Clifford
GillesRealty.com
Lange, Irvin B.
Orton, Senes D.
Pierson, Larry
Rutt, Mable
Shawley, Margaret J.
Three Rivers Timber, Inc.
Woods, Trent

Environmental and Recreational Groups

Coeur d'Alene Dist. Resource Advisory Council
Dust Devils ATV Club
Framing Our Community
Friends of the Clearwater
Idaho Conservation League
Ida-Lew Economic Development Council
The Ecology Center, Inc

Government and Tribal Agencies

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Idaho Department of Commerce/Labor
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Idaho Department of Lands
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
Minerals Management Service
National Park Service
Nez Perce National Forest
Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
Nez Perce Tribe Cultural Program
Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries Division
Nez Perce Tribe Natural Resource Division
Nez Perce Tribe Office of Legal Council
NOAA Fisheries
Office of Surface Mining
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Department of Energy
US Department of the Interior
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Fish & Wildlife Service
US Geological Survey

Elected Officials

Idaho County Commissioners
Idaho State Representative Paul Shepherd
Idaho State Representative Ken A. Roberts
Idaho State Senator Leland Heinrich
US Representative Bill Sali
US Senator Larry E. Craig
US Senator Mike Crapo

4.3 Consultation

Consultation with the NMFS and the USFWS was initiated February 2004 with the sending of a scoping letter. During March 2004, a Level 1 meeting was held with BLM and NPNF staff and NMFS and USFWS biologists. During this meeting the NPNF American and River Crooked River Project and BLM Eastside Project proposals were presented, along with some initial analysis information on the projects. Consultation has been ongoing, with exchange of information and several field reviews of the project area. A draft Biological Assessment (BA) has been prepared for the project and submitted to NMFS and USFWS. Consultation on the project will continue and a final BA will be submitted to NMFS and USFWS. Once the Biological Opinion (BO) for the Eastside Project is received the Record of Decision will be completed.

The BLM will continue to coordinate and consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality regarding any necessary permits and/or water quality certification related to floodplains, wetlands, and streams. Review of the Draft EIS has been completed by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (December 11, 2006) and it complies with Idaho's Water Quality Standards 58.01.01.350.

A cultural resource inventory was conducted to identify historic properties in the area of potential effect. Identified properties were evaluated for their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places, and project design measures were initiated to prevent an adverse effect. The Nez Perce Tribe was consulted to gather information regarding potential issues in the analysis area. Consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe's Cultural Department continued throughout project development to identify cultural resources and Traditional Cultural Properties. The Nez Perce Tribe's Natural Resource Subcommittee was consulted and representatives from the Tribe attended a field tour in 2005. The Cottonwood Field Manager met with the Subcommittee several times, as recently as October 3, 2006, to request input on the Draft EIS. Consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been completed.

4.4 Public Scoping Synopsis

The public comment garnered during the scoping process came from various sources, including other Federal and State Agencies, the Nez Perce Tribe, organized groups at the local and regional level, and individuals.

The consideration of feedback (those perceived cause-effects) was documented to determine those to be considered for further analysis (as potential effects) and to help gather the various cause-effects statements into issues to be analyzed in depth. A brief description of the process follows.

The feedback was broken into statements that contain the perceived/alleged cause-effect. The statement was used to assign a cause (an activity in the proposed action) and an effect. A determination was then made if it constituted an applicable potential effect to consider further. The various cause-effects were lumped into issue statements used in the analysis in this EIS.

The bulk of the perceived cause-effect statements in decreasing number were centered around: road & trail factors; watershed- and fisheries-related existing conditions and outcomes; present and future fuels and vegetation conditions; wildlife concerns; economics; and recreation.

4.5 Comments Received on the Draft EIS and BLM Responses

The 60-day public comment period on the Draft EIS started on July 14, 2006 and ended on September 11, 2006. In August, 2006, a public meeting was held in Elk City, Idaho. Two members of the public

attended the meeting. A total of 10 comment letters were received on the Draft EIS from individuals, groups and government agencies.

The following individuals and organizations submitted comments to the BLM concerning the Eastside Project. Each comment letter, listed by author and the individual comments within has been assigned a number to identify the comment and the ID Team response. The ID Team reviewed each comment letter and addressed those comments that were substantive in nature and within the scope of this project. These comments and their responses are listed below.

Letter Number:

1. B. Sachau. 07/11/2006.
2. Idaho State Department of Parks & Recreation (Jeff Cook). 08/24/2006.
3. Larry and Shirley Biggers. 08/29/2006.
4. Idaho Conservation League (Jonathan Oppenheimer). 09/07/2006.
5. Lynne Nelson. 09/07/2006
6. Joseph Bayley. 09/08/2006.
7. Susan Westervelt. 09/08/2006.
8. F. Russell and Roberta Bonnalie. 09/08/2006.
9. Friends of the Clearwater (Gary MacFarlane). 09/11/2006
10. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Christine B. Reichgott). 09/11/2006

Letter 1: B. Sachau



jean public
<jeanpublic@yahoo.com>
07/11/2006 08:18 AM

To: ROBBIN.BOYCE@BLM.GOV, WOINFO@BLM.GOV,
PRESIDENT@WHITEHOUSE.GOV
cc
bcc
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT ON FEDERAL REGISTER OF 7/11/06
VOL 71 #132 PG 39126

DOI ID 420 2824 DD FM 04
NOA DEIS EAST SIDE TWP IDAHO

1-1

THIS IS A LOGGING PROJECT TO ENRICH LOCAL LOGGERS PURE AND SIMPLY. I VERY MUCH OPPOSE THIS ENTIRE PROJECT.

I ALSO THINK THE FOLLOWING LAWS SHOULD BE IMPOSED ON THIS NATIONALLY OWNED BY TAXPAYER LAND, WHICH IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING DESTROYED COURTESY OF THE CORRUPT WASHINGTON BUREAUCRACY.

BAN

1. HUNTING
2. TRAPPING
3. NEW ROADS
4. ALL SNOWMOBILES AND ORV'S
5. USE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS
6. PRESCRIBED BURNING OF ANY KIND, WHICH RELEASES VERY FINE PARTICULATE MATTER WHICH TRAVELS THOUSANDS OF MILES SETTLING IN THE LUNGS OF PEOPLE CAUSING LUNG CANCER, HEART ATTACKS, STROKES, ASTHMA, ALLERGIES AND PNEUMONIA, KILLING AND INJURING FELLOW AMERICANS.

B. SACHAU
15 ELM ST
FLORHAM PARK NJ 07932

Do You Yahoo!?
Tired of spam? Yahoo! Mail has the best spam protection around
<http://mail.yahoo.com>

Letter 1: B. Sachau

Comment: 1-1

Response: Thank you for your comments on the Eastside Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Letter 2: Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation



JAMES E. RISCH
governor

Robert L. Meinen
director

Dean Sangrey, Administrator
operations division

David M. Ricks, Administrator
management services division

IDAHO PARK AND
RECREATION BOARD

Sue Klatt
region one

Randal F. Rice
region two

Ernest J. Lombard
region three

Latham Williams
region four

Jean S. McDevitt
region five

Douglas A. Hanney
region six

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS AND RECREATION

p.o. box 83720
boise, idaho 83720-0065

(208) 334-4199

fax (208) 334-3741

tdd 1-800-377-3529

street address
5657 Warm Springs Avenue

www.parksandrec.idaho.gov

August 24, 2006

Greg M. Yunceovich, Field Manager
Cottonwood Field Office, BLM
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, ID 83522

RE: Eastside Township Fuels & Vegetation Project DEIS

Dear Mr. Yunceovich:

Staff reviewed the Eastside Township Fuels & Vegetation Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The project proposes to harvest timber, conduct prescribed burning, and decommission roads on the east side of the Elk City Township.

We previously commented on this project during the Notice of Intent period. In our comments, we were concerned about how the project would affect snowmobiling opportunities in the area.

Several of the harvest units would use Road #443 or Road #1809 as log haul routes. These roads are a part of the Elk City Snowmobile Trail System. In order to not disrupt snowmobiling in the Elk City area, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation requests that winter logging be prohibited.

If winter logging is necessary, winter logging operations should cease after December 15th. This mitigation measure would allow snowmobiling on these roads for most of the winter.

We were disappointed that this mitigation measure was not developed into the project design features. Is the BLM planning to log this area during the winter? If so, would it continue after December 15th?

If winter logging is going to occur, the Cottonwood Field Office needs to work closely with the Elk River/Dixie Snowmobile Grooming Program. Mike Howzen is grooming program contact. His phone number is (208) 842-2749.

Working with the grooming program should minimize potential conflicts between the logging operation and the snowmobiling public.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS. If you have any questions about our comments, please contact me at (208) 334-4180 ext. 230.

Sincerely,

Jeff Cook, Outdoor Recreation Analyst
Comprehensive Planning, Research and Review

RECEIVED

AUG 28 2006

WLM Cottonwood
Idaho 83522

2-1

2-2

2-3

2-4

Letter 2: Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation

Comment: 2-1

Response: The effect of the project on recreation, including snowmobiling, was considered in the design process. Please refer to the Project Design Measures Table 2.3.1, which includes the requirement to maintain a minimum of two inches of snow when plowing roads (item 10). This would allow for snowmobile use on the roads as well. Items 11 and 39 in this Table allow for harvest during frozen conditions to help mitigate impacts to soil and plants. There would be fewer environmental impacts from winter logging operations. Upon further communication with Jeff Cook, roads #443 and #1818 noted in the DEIS are part of the snowmobile system, while road #1809 is not.

Comment: 2-2

Response: See Response to Comment 2-1.

Comment: 2-3

Response: See Response to Comment 2-1.

Comment: 2-4

Response: We contacted Mike Howzen and will continue to work with the grooming program in mitigating the impacts from the project. Where possible, the BLM will plow one lane for logging traffic and leave one lane unplowed to be groomed for snowmobile use. Logging traffic will be prohibited on weekends to reduce potential conflicts between logging and snowmobile use.

Letter 3: Larry and Shirley Biggers

RECEIVED
AUG 29 2006
BLM Cottonwood
Idaho 83522

Bureau of Land Management
Cottonwood Field Office
1 Butte Drive
Cottonwood, Id. 83522-5200

Attention: Robin B. Boyce

Sir:

This is in reference to the Eastside Project Area of American River. It seems that you are still considering the Decommission of the road that goes up river from the county bridge. As you probably know the existing road has a very good rock base that does not give way to mud during the spring thaw. The only time we have to go into four-wheel drive is sometimes when we reach portions of the County road between the County bridge and town. If you talk with the County Road Dept. they can tell you how many tons of rock they have applied to that area, and in a short period of time the rock has been swallowed up and there is mud once again.

3-1 | In a meeting sometime back, we asked if you would maintain the proposed new road. You made it very clear that you do not do road maintenance. Any new road you build will be a mud hole, and impassable during the spring thaw, without regular maintenance.

For these reasons we object to any thought of Decommissioning of the present road in favor of a new road between the American River bridge and the private property belonging to Jeff Stacy McCusker. There are a number of families that live here year round and we have to have a road that is useable the year round.

3-2 | In the event you decide to Decommission the present road there will be litigation.

Sincerely

Larry and Shirley Biggers

Letter 3: Larry and Shirley Biggers

Comment: 3-1

Response: We understand your concerns. We took these into consideration along with our need to reduce sediment and complete the watershed restoration portions of this project. (See the Roads information in Section 3.8.1.3 for a discussion about permanent road construction). By using geosynthetic fabrics and/or geogrid systems along with predetermined depths of pit run rock for base; proper drainage, and surface material, the new road would be designed and built to address the spring thaw and wet conditions. We expect a properly designed road would require less maintenance than the existing road, which consists primarily of dredge waste rock, would meet the needs of the landowners while improving riparian habitats and further reducing sediment in the American River. Continuing with present day maintenance activities, the road could be maintained for year round use.

Comment: 3-2

Response: We hope you and other local landowners will consider the need to improve water quality and fish habitat in the American River. Thank you for your comment on the Eastside Draft Environmental Impact Statement.