

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Scott Luscher HRA 27-B-47509 Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date: February 24, 2020
Proponent: Scott Luscher
Location: E/2 of SW/4 of section 2, T27N R30W (48°07'49.41"N 115°25'59.57"W)
County: Lincoln

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To allow the operation of wheeled or tracked equipment in a streamside management zone. The proposed action would utilize an existing skid trail to cross a class 2 intermittent stream while the reach is dry and under frozen soil conditions. The alternative practice would allow for management of about 10 acres of land currently landlocked on the other side of this stream.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

No adjacent landowners are expected to be affected by the proposal so public scoping was not deemed necessary.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

None

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

No action alternative: Do not harvest this corner of the property. Approximately 10 acres of land becomes unmanageable to the landowner and forest health conditions will continue to deteriorate. Landowner pays taxes on these acres and wants to be able to use them.

Action alternatives considered:

1) construct new road and stream crossing incurring the expense and maintenance obligations of additional infrastructure in perpetuity. This alternative is cost prohibitive, would have long term impacts to the stream, and is not necessary to meet the need which is to access these 10 acres perhaps for a two-week period every two decades.

2) obtain alternative practice that would allow the utilization of existing skid trail and crossing (last used perhaps 30 years ago) to skid forest products across stream when it is dry and frozen. Mitigate by hand cleaning all materials deposited in stream course during skidding activities immediately, scarify and grass seed 50' either side of stream crossing promptly after use and construct waterbars at SMZ boundary to discourage use of crossing after forest management activity is completed. This alternative is cost effective, meets the needs of the landowner, and has a short term, low impact on the stream.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

Kootenai Land Type 108; this soil type is lacustrine and glacial outwash terraces. This fine textured material mixed with round rock is capable of high timber productivity yet is susceptible to rutting when used when wet.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

A revegetated existing skid trail that is within the SMZ of a class 2 stream would be reused. This trail is perpendicular to the stream. It would be expected for the proposed action would have a short term turbidity impact to the stream for the brief period when it actively flows during the first spring runoff after use. There is immediately downstream from the proposed crossing site a natural flat wetland complex that the stream flows through that allows for filtration.

Constructing a new road and installing a culvert at the stream crossing site would likely have a higher impact on the water quality due to a road with bare soil being exposed on the site in perpetuity. There is also a low probability of a very high impact on the water quality should the culvert wash out.

Mitigation measures for alternative 2 would have minimal impacts to water quality and the integrity of the SMZ. The applicant prefers to reuse the existing skid trail and apply Forestry BMPs to minimize impacts to the stream which improves management options.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

Normal air pollution that is associated with a standard logging operation.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

The no action alternative would mean the forest conditions continue to deteriorate, the trees that are dying will add fuel to the forest floor and non-desirable tree species would continue to increase. Either action alternative allows for forest management to keep the landowners forest healthy and productive.

No rare, sensitive plants or cover types were observed during ground reconnaissance. Minimal vegetation disturbance would occur from logging.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The site of the proposed alternative practice shows no significant use by wildlife, birds or fish.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Threatened or endangered species such as lynx and grizzly bears may migrate through the area. There were no denning sites noted on the property. The proposed SMZ crossing should not diminish habitat elements for these species.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources were observed during field reconnaissance nor are any known by the landowner.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Normal temporary noise increase associated with logging operations. Visual appearance of site and surrounding property would appear uniform across ownerships. This location is not visible from outside of this ownership.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No limited resources will be used for this project. There are no other activities nearby that will affect the project.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

No other environmental documents are known for this tract.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Normal Health risks associated with a logging operation.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project will add a minor amount of additional timber to the local wood products industry.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.

This project would add 10-14 days of additional work and income to the landowner.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Minor additional income tax revenue would be generated from the additional work.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There would not be any affects to the local government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There is no known zoning or management planning for this area.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This activity would have no impact to access to or quality of recreational and wilderness activities for the public.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

This activity would have no impact to density or distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Logging is an activity that would be considered a traditional lifestyle for this community and area; this activity would not disrupt social structures.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Cultural uniqueness and diversity would not be affected.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

There are no unique social or economic qualities on this site.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeremy Rank	Date: 2/20/2020
	Title: Service Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative 2 is selected. Reuse existing skid trail to cross the class 2 SMZ to conduct harvest activities when the reach of stream is dry and under frozen soil conditions. Mitigate by scarifying crossing within the SMZ, grass seeding and installing waterbar at SMZ boundary to discourage any additional use of the crossing after rehabilitation. Hand clean all debris that was deposited in the steam channel promptly and apply BMPs during operations.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

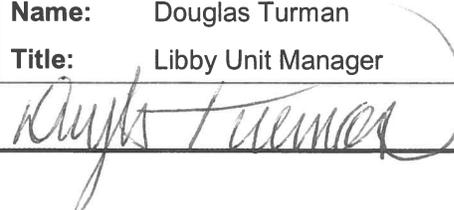
All action alternatives have the potential to have impacts to the land or water resources. Alternative 2 proposes to both minimize these impacts while still allowing management activities to proceed. The application of forestry BMPs will minimize impact to water quality.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

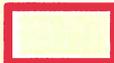
More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Douglas Turman	
	Title: Libby Unit Manager	
Signature:		Date: 2/20/20

**Scott Luscher HRA 27B47509
T27N R30W section 2**

Legend

 Luscher_Ownership



AP location

