

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: DNRC Jim Junction timber sale project Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date: August 2020
Proponent: Montana Dept of Natural Resources and Conservation
Location: sections 13 & 24, T33N R26W (48°36'59.08"N 115°54'17.27"W)
County: Lincoln

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To allow the operation of wheeled or tracked equipment in a streamside management zone and to allow the removal of trees threatening adjacent Lincoln Electric Coop high voltage distribution lines within the SMZ. The alternative practice would allow for management and restoration along approximately 3400 of class 1 stream and adjacent wetlands while also allowing for the safe operation and maintenance of high voltage power distribution lines operated by Lincoln Electric Coop (LEC).

This Alternative Practice EA is tying to the DNRC EA titled Jim Junction Timber Sale Project. This decision was made on June 29, 2020. Please refer to the DNRC EA for their findings of impacts.

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.

Lincoln County Zone service forester was consulted in mid-February 2020 by DNRC Stillwater Unit. Stillwater Unit of DNRC has handled all public involvement.

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.

DNRC Stillwater Unit conducted their environmental analysis, the DNRC Forestry Assistance has jurisdiction over the SMZ law and any alternative practices, the USFS has jurisdiction over fire protection, State historical preservation office has jurisdiction over cultural and historic resources. DEQ and Lincoln County have jurisdiction over air shed burning permits.

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 issue AP. This would continue to allow high hazard trees to exist adjacent to the power lines. These trees are susceptible to windthrow and increases the danger to line workers, outages to residences and the probability of fire ignition due to vegetation contact with power lines.

Action alternative:

Issue Alternative Practice that allows operation of wheeled and tracked equipment within the SMZ to harvest and remove all hazardous trees to LEC facilities. This would allow DNRC and LEC to meet their stated needs. Mitigate by operating within the SMZ under frozen and snow-covered conditions will minimize soil and water

impacts. Fully suspend harvested trees when removing from across the stream, and hand clean all debris that falls in the stream channel promptly, protect sub merchantable trees and brush to fullest extent possible and apply BMPs during operations.

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 323 & 329; anticipated impacts with action alternative would be low.

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.

Approximately 0.77 acres of SMZ would remove additional trees that pose a risk of falling onto power lines in the area. This practice would retain all sub merchantable trees and shrubs as well as any trees that are not anticipated to fall into powerlines. Access to harvest within the SMZ portion would utilize an existing trail that is well-vegetated but located within the 50-foot SMZ; this work would be implemented under winter conditions. Water quality for timber related project primarily refers to impacts from harvest operations which could affect sediment delivery or impacts stream temperature as a result of reduced shade.

The removal of additional trees in the SMZ would reduce the shade along approximately 930 feet of stream. This would be expected to have a moderate risk (50% chance) of having low impacts (measurable, but not detrimental). A low risk of low impacts (unlikely to occur) of sediment delivery from this proposal, including using the existing trail in the SMZ.

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.

Jim Junction timber sale project EA discloses that there would be minimal impacts to air resources anticipated.

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.

Jim Junction timber sale project EA discloses that there would be none to minor impacts to vegetation resources and nothing out of historical context of vegetation management.

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.

Jim Junction timber sale project EA discloses that there may be minor impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic resources.

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 grizzly bears and Canada lynx may use the area. Jim Junction timber sale project EA indicates proposed actions would be low impact on overall behavior, populations, or habitat.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

No impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are expected.

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.

No impacts to aesthetics are expected, though a more open corridor along the powerlines would be noticeable.

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.

Jim Junction timber sale project Environmental Assessment decision was released on June 29, 2020.

<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. Action alternative ultimately strives to increase safety by reducing the occurrences of linemen working on downed powerlines, residences without power for long durations, and reduced probability of powerline source wildfire ignitions.

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 ≈1 day of additional work and income to the contractor.

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: 7/10/2020
	Title: Service Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

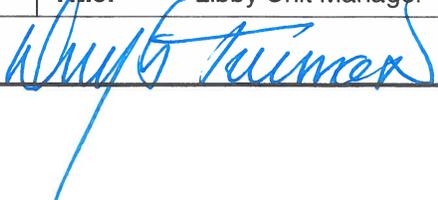
The Action Alternative is selected. Issue Alternative Practice that allows operation of wheeled and tracked equipment within the SMZ and authorized removal of all trees posing hazards to LEC powerlines within the SMZ. This would allow DNRC and LEC to meet their state need. Mitigate by operating within the SMZ under frozen and snow-covered conditions will minimize soil and water impacts. Fully suspend any trees removed from the opposite side of the creek the harvesting equipment is operating from, hand clean all debris that falls in the steam channel promptly, protect sub merchantable trees and brush to fullest extent possible 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. This action alternative proposes to both minimize these impacts while still allowing management activities to proceed. This action also will ultimately provide a safer environment by reducing the occurrences of linemen working on downed powerlines, residences without power for long durations, and reduced probability of powerline source wildfire ignitions. 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: 7/24/20

