DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

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DECISION NOTICE
White Porcupine Multiple Timber Sale Project
February 4, 2009

INTRODUCTION

I have reviewed all the information and comments received during the preparation of the White Porcupine Multiple Timber Sale Project.

I have reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), including comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the responses to those comments as presented in the FEIS.

I have compared the alternatives to the project objectives and evaluated their advantages and disadvantages.

I have reviewed each identified issue and the analysis of environmental effects for each alternative displayed in the FEIS.

I have carefully compared the Proposed Decision with philosophy and direction contained within Department policies, the State Forest Land Management Plan (SFLMP), and the Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARMs).

DECISION

I have chosen to implement Action Alternative B, as described in the *FEIS PROPOSED DECISION* (*FEIS, pages II-60* through *II-72*) without modification. Action Alternative B would implement all recommended mitigations in the White Porcupine Multiple Timber Sale Project FEIS.

Action Alternative B **consists of several timber sales and smaller permits** totaling 21.5 million board feet (MMbf), spread over a 3-year period, averaging 7.2 MMbf per year. This represents approximately 13.7 percent of the state's harvest during 2009 through 2011.

Instead of doing analysis for each individual timber sale, the FEIS was designed to analyze and display the cumulative effects for multiple timber sales. Although this has caused some confusion (some think this is one large timber sale), the resulting effects analysis is more complete and accurate.

Action Alternative B meets the *PURPOSE OF PROPOSED ACTION* and *PROJECT OBJECTIVES* (*FEIS page I-2*) as displayed within the FEIS PROPOSED DECISION. The proposed mitigations are adequate and feasible. In addition, Action Alternative B complies with the philosophy of the SFLMP and all Department policies, state laws, and administrative rules.

A large number of stands in the project area are severely affected by a variety of insects and diseases. These stands are experiencing heavy mortality and economic value loss. I believe that more than any other alternative, treatments in Action Alternative B are focused on rehabilitating stands with the greatest amounts of mortality and economic value loss while using sustainable forestry principles.

I believe that Action Alternative B strikes the best balance between the protection of ecologic values and addressing insect and disease problems in the project area while providing benefits for local economies and generating revenue that support Montana's public schools.

The complete rationale for choosing Action Alternative B is displayed in the *FEIS PROPOSED DECISION* (*FEIS, pages II-67* through *II-72*).

Upon execution of this decision, I will recommend that the first White Porcupine Timber Sale Project Contract be submitted to the Board of Land Commissioners for approval at their regularly scheduled meeting in February.

Daniel J. Roberson

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