Weeksville

Timber Sale

Environmental Assessment

Checklist

Plains Unit

Northwest Land Office

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

April 2026

Weeksville Timber Sale

Environmental Assessment Checklist

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MEMORANDUM

To: Nate Weaver, Management Forester

From: David Olsen, Plains Unit Resource Program Manager

Date: November 1, 2025

RE: Weeksville Timber Sale Objectives

Primary Objective

The primary objective of the Weeksville Timber Sale is to generate income for the Common School (CS) Trust. The parcel involved in the proposed project is Section 36, Township 25 North, Range 27 West.

This project would provide an estimated 2.0 MMBF of merchantable timber applied toward meeting the FY 2027 Northwestern Land Office timber sale volume target.

Secondary Objectives

Minimize losses in timber quality and available volume resulting from deteriorating stand conditions in the defined project area.

Promote the continued presence and/or re-establishment of historically appropriate timber types on Trust Lands included in this project.

Reduce fire hazard and associated risks of loss to the State of Montana and privately-owned land in the area.

Management Directives

In planning and preparing this project, requirements and specified actions as designated in the DNRC HCP shall be addressed. Management direction from the State Forest Land Management Plan and Administrative Rules shall be followed, and all applicable Streamside Management Zones rules and regulations will be met. Montana Best Management Practices will be applied in all instances.

Environmental Assessment Checklist

Project Name: Weeksville
Proposed Implementation Date: FY 2027
Proponent: Plains Unit, Northwest Land Office, Montana DNRC
County: Sanders

Type and Purpose of Action

Description of Proposed Action:
The Plains Unit of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), along with the Northwest Land Office, is proposing the Weeksville Timber Sale. The project is located 0.5 miles up Weeksville Creek Rd, which is 7 miles West of Plains, MT on highway 200. (refer to Attachments vicinity map A-**1** and project map A-**2**) and includes the following sections: T: 21N R: 27W Section 36

Beneficiary	Legal Description	Total Acres	Treated Acres
Common Schools	**T21N R27W S36**	**560**	**200**
Public Buildings			
MSU 2nd Grant			
MSU Morrill			
Eastern College-MSU/Western College-U of M			
Montana Tech			
University of Montana			
School for the Deaf and Blind			
Pine Hills School			
Veterans Home			
Public Land Trust			
Acquired Land			

Objectives of the project include:
- Move stands toward desired future conditions
- Emulate natural disturbance regimes

- Promote/establish regeneration
- Enhance stand growth and vigor
- Address insect and disease issues
- Reduce fuel loading/fire hazard
- Generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries

Proposed activities include:

Action	Quantity
Proposed Harvest Activities	# Acres
Clearcut	
Seed Tree	11
Shelterwood	55
Selection	63
Old Growth Maintenance/Restoration	
Commercial Thinning	
Salvage	
Overstory Removal	71
Total Treatment Acres	**200**
Proposed Forest Improvement Treatment	# Acres
Pre-commercial Thinning	
Site preparation/scarification	
Planting	
Proposed Road Activities	# Miles
New permanent road construction	0.7
New temporary road construction	
Road maintenance	5.7
Road reconstruction	
Road abandoned	
Road reclaimed	
Other Activities	

Duration of Activities:	5 Years
Implementation Period:	July 2026-July 2031

The lands involved in this proposed project are held in trust by the State of Montana (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889; 1972 Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the DNRC are required by law to administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for the beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA).

The DNRC would manage lands involved in this project in accordance with:

- The State Forest Land Management Plan (DNRC 1996),
- Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARM 36.11.401 through 471),
- The Montana DNRC Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) (DNRC 2010)
- and all other applicable state and federal laws.

Project Development

SCOPING:

- DATE:
  - February 24, 2025
- PUBLIC SCOPED:
  - The scoping notice was posted on the DNRC Website: https://dnrc.mt.gov/News/scoping-notices
  - Adjacent landowners received the notice by mail and individuals subscribed to the statewide and Plains Units timber scoping lists received the notice by email.
- AGENCIES SCOPED:
  - Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), United States Forest Service (USFS), Idaho Forest Group (IFG), Sanders County Weed Control, Thompson River Lumber (TRL), Plains/Thompson Falls Ranger District, Cabinet Ranger District, Land Management Chair – MCAFS, Montana Environmental Information Center, Montana Audubon, MSU – Bozeman, Montana Farm Bureau Federation and Montana tribal organizations.
- COMMENTS RECEIVED:
  - How many: Seven comments were received from local residents, the grazing lessee and FWP.
  - Concerns:
    - Local residents expressed concerns about new road construction, soil erosion and compaction, wildlife, forest health, native plant species, introduction of invasive species, stream health, recreation and economics/revenue generation for the trust. Some residents also expressed general support for the project due to the presence of dead and dying timber in the area, occurrence of illegal firewood harvesting and illegal stream crossings.
    - The grazing lessee expressed concerns about how the project may affect the grazing license.
    - One local resident also expressed concern about a road he has easement on within the project area.
    - FWP commented about the importance of the area as wildlife habitat and suggested mitigations for big horn sheep habitat and stream habitat for fisheries.
  - Results:
    - DNRC worked with FWP biologists on timing restrictions to prohibit winter logging harvest in certain harvest units to mitigate impacts to big horn sheep.
    - Silvicultural prescription treatments would address insect and disease issues in the project area and reduce wildfire risk within the project area.
    - DNRC assured the grazing lessee that grazing cattle would be avoided during project operations.
    - All roads within the project area, including the road easement held by the adjacent landowner, would include post-harvest maintenance prior to contract completion.

- DNRC would follow Best Management Practices (BMP's) to minimize the amount of soil displacement and that new roads would be gated and closed to motorized vehicles.
- DNRC would implement a 100 foot 'checkerboard' closure on either side of the creek to prevent any future access or use of the ford. Checkerboard closures utilize an excavator to scoop a single bucket and deposit the fill next to the hole. This is repeated with a new hole as many times as necessary to complete the closure. This stream closure would prevent illegal stream crossings in this location and would reduce likelihood of illegal firewood harvesting in the future.
- The DNRC informed interested commenters that the Plains Unit is mandated to contribute to the statewide 60MMBF annual harvest in order to generate revenue for the trusts. The current sustained yield was calculated in 2020 and was adopted by the Land Board. This project would likely contribute to the Fiscal Year 2027 harvest volume and revenue.
- All substantive concerns and comments that were brought forth in public comments were considered and addressed by the ID team in this EA document.

DNRC specialists were consulted, including: Tony Nelson (Hydrologist), Victoria Forristal (Wildlife biologist), Tim Spoelma (Silviculturist)

Internal and external issues and concerns were incorporated into project planning and design and will be implemented in associated contracts.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED: *(Conservation Easements, Army Corps of Engineers, road use permits, etc.)*

- **United States Fish & Wildlife Service-** DNRC is managing the habitats of threatened and endangered species on this project by implementing the Montana DNRC Forested Trust Lands HCP and the associated Incidental Take Permit that was issued by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in February of 2012 under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act. The HCP identifies specific conservation strategies for managing the habitats of grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and three fish species: bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and Columbia redband trout. This project complies with the HCP. The HCP can be found at https://dnrc.mt.gov/TrustLand/about/planning-and-reports.

- **Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)-** DNRC is classified as a major open burner by DEQ and is issued a permit from DEQ to conduct burning activities on state lands managed by DNRC. As a major open-burning permit holder, DNRC agrees to comply with the limitations and conditions of the permit.

  A Short-term Exemption from Montana's Surface Water Quality Standards (318 Authorization) may also be required from DEQ if activities such as replacing a bridge on a stream would introduce sediment above natural levels into streams.

- **Montana/Idaho Airshed Group-** The DNRC is a member of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group which was formed to minimize or prevent smoke impacts while using fire to

accomplish land management objectives and/or fuel hazard reduction (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2010). As a member, DNRC must submit a list of planned burns to the Airshed Group's Smoke Monitoring Unit describing the type of burn to be conducted, the size of the burn in acres, the estimated fuel loading in tons/acre, and the location and elevation of each burn site. The Smoke Monitoring Unit provides timely restriction messages by airshed. DNRC is required to abide by those restrictions and burn only when granted approval by the Smoke Monitoring Unit when forecasted conditions are conducive to good smoke dispersion.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No-Action Alternative: Under this alternative, no timber would be harvested and therefore no revenue would be generated from the project area. Forest health would decline due to overcrowding of trees and inefficient spacing decreasing the supply of timber for future generations and future job markets. The trust would continue to lose stumpage value within the stand. Wildfire risk would also increase as time went on due to increased fuel loading from disease and dying timber.

Action Alternative: This commercial timber harvest would take place using ground based and cable yarding methods on 200 treated acres to remove around 1.7 million board feet of timber, generating revenue from this trust land. Forest health would improve as remaining trees would increase their growth to maximum efficiency from decreased resource competition with other trees. It would also establish regeneration in the forest for future generations. Timber sale design would promote and reestablish timber types historically found in these areas.

Impacts on the Physical Environment

Evaluation of the impacts on the No-Action and Action Alternatives including **direct, secondary, and cumulative** impacts on the Physical Environment.

VEGETATION:

Vegetation Existing Conditions:

Harvest Unit	Habitat Group	Fire Regime	Current Cover Type	Age Class (years)	DFC	RX	Acres
36-1	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Douglas Fir	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Shelterwood Harvest	30
36-2	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Douglas Fir	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Shelterwood Harvest	11
36-3	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	40-99	Ponderosa Pine	Shelterwood Harvest	14
36-4	Warm and Dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	40-99	Ponderosa Pine	Overstory Removal	12
36-5	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Overstory Removal	20
36-6	Warm and moist (westside)	Mixed	Mixed Conifer	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Seed Tree	11
36-7	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Overstory Removal	39
36-8	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	40-99	Ponderosa Pine	Individual/Select Tree Harvest	28
36-9	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Individual/Select Tree Harvest	29

36-10	Moderately warm and dry (westside)	Low-to-mixed	Ponderosa Pine	100-149	Ponderosa Pine	Individual/Select Tree Harvest	6

Fire Hazard/Fuels: All units have been identified as high frequency and low-to-mixed severity regime. In several of the harvest units there are scattered patches of Douglas-Fir beetle and Western Pine Beetle infested areas which are increasing the amount of down woody debris. The current stand density and abundance of dead and down trees increase the possibility of a high severity fire. The project area is within the wildland-urban interface.

Insects and Diseases: Some mistletoe present in Doug Fir. Douglas-fir beetle and western pine beetle are present and active in the project area, and damage from them is expected to increase with declining vigor of stands.

Sensitive/Rare Plants: No plant species of concern identified by the MNHP in the project area.

Noxious Weeds: Common Mullen, Spotted Knapweed, St Johnswort along open roads

Vegetation	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Current Cover/DFCs		x				x				x			N	V-1
Age Class	x				x				x					V-2
Old Growth	x				x				x				N	V-3
Fire/Fuels	x				x				x				N	V-4
Insects/Disease			x				x				x		N	V-5
Rare Plants	x				x				x					
Noxious Weeds	x				x				x				N	
Action														
Current Cover/DFCs		x				x				x			Y	V-1
Age Class			x			x				x			N	V-2
Old Growth	x				x				x				N	V-3
Fire/Fuels			x				x			x			Y	V-4
Insects/Disease			x				x			x			Y	V-5
Rare Plants	x				x				x				N	
Noxious Weeds		x				x				x			Y	V-1

Comments:

V-1: under No-Action, there would be no change to existing cover types and over a long term forest cover types would tend to increasingly depart from desired cover types identified within

the project area. The proposed action alternative would promote the continued development of the desired future cover types. Trees would be harvested based on the designated silvicultural prescription in each harvest unit to move towards the stands desired future conditions while maintaining tree growth and vigor. 41 acres of the Douglas-fir cover type would be expected to shift to the ponderosa pine cover type, 11 acres of mixed conifer to ponderosa pine, and 148 acres of the desired ponderosa pine cover type would be maintained. Treatments performed under the proposed action would increase spacing between trees and decrease competition resulting in increased tree growth.

V-2: under No-Action, there would be no change to current age classes. The proposed action would shift 71 acres where overstory removal treatments are implemented to younger age classes. Age classes in the remaining acres treated with shelterwood and individual tree selection prescriptions would not change due to the prescribed retention of overstory trees, although anticipated regeneration in shelterwood units would be expected to introduce a cohort of younger trees in those units.

V-3: There are no old growth stands present in the project area.

V-4: under No-Action, there would be no immediate change to existing fuels and fire hazard, but fuels would be expected to accumulate and fire hazard risk would be expected to increase over time. Treatments performed under the proposed action would remove accumulated fuels and increase spacing between trees, resulting in reduced amounts of forest fuels and fire hazard.

V-5: under No-Action, mistletoe and bark beetles would continue to affect stands, resulting in reduced tree growth and vigor and accumulation of dead and down material. The proposed Action would reduce incidence of mistletoe and bark beetle activity through removal of affected trees and increased tree vigor resulting from decreased competition between trees.

V-6: under the proposed action, ground disturbance associated with timber harvest activities could create conditions suitable for the introduction or spread of noxious weed species. Potential impacts can be mitigated using integrated weed management approaches including washing of equipment, grass seeding of roads, and herbicide application prior to and following harvest.

Vegetation Mitigations:

- To minimize the potential for the spread of noxious weeds, off-road equipment would be cleaned and inspected as required in the timber sale contract to avoid seed migration.
- If sensitive plant species are observed within the project area, an equipment restriction zone would be made around the specimen and plant survey would be completed.
- All harvest units Should have a minimum of 2 snags and 2 snag-recruits over 21 inches DBH. These snags and recruitment trees may be clumped or evenly distributed throughout the harvest units.

SOIL DISTURBANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY: The landform and parent materials in the project area are generally quartzite and argillite bedrock soils with small areas of glacial till or glacial drift influence. The majority of the bedrock consists of slightly metamorphosed sedimentary rocks formed from sand, silt, clay, and carbonate materials deposited in an ancient shallow sea during the Precambrian period.

Soil Disturbance and Productivity Existing Conditions: There are approximately 5.6 miles of low to moderate standard existing road within and leading to the proposed Weeksville project area. Timber harvesting activities in the proposed project area began in the 1920s. The most recent timber management in the project area was completed in 2002 with numerous timber permits also occurring. Existing skid trails from prior entries are ameliorating due to root penetration and frost action and impacts from past entries are abating, though still identifiable on the ground. The roads and skid trails are not an existing source of erosion or sediment delivery.

Soil Disturbance and Productivity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Erosion	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Nutrient Cycling	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Slope Stability	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Soil Productivity	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**S-1**
Erosion		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**S-2**
Nutrient Cycling		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**S-3**
Slope Stability	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Soil Productivity		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**S-4**

Comments:
S-1: Approximately 10.5% of proposed harvest areas may be in an impacted condition based on DNRC soil monitoring on similar soils with a similar harvest intensity, (DNRC, 2006). This level is below the range analyzed for in the *EXPECTED FUTURE CONDITIONS* section of the *SFLMP*, and well within the 20-percent impacted area established as a level of concern in the *SFLMP (DNRC 1996)*. This level translates to a low risk of low direct, secondary and cumulative impacts to soil physical disturbance.

S-2: Low impacts to soil erosion are possible due to exposure of bare soil during felling and yarding operations and road construction activities. Risk of erosion would be mitigated by implementing all applicable BMPs to harvesting and road building activities.

S-3: Based on research by Graham, et. al. (1994), habitat types found in each project area should have 4-24 tons/acre of coarse woody debris for nutrient cycling. Logging residue left on the ground as mitigation would have a positive effect on nutrient cycling and improve the project area over the current condition.

S-4: Soil productivity would be impacted by road construction and the use of ground-based machinery to yard timber in the project area. As stated in comment **S-1**, levels of ground disturbance are expected to be less than 10.5% with roads included, which is well below the range analyzed for in the EXPECTED FUTURE CONDITIONS section of the SFLMP, and well within the 20-percent impacted area established as a level of concern in the SFLMP (DNRC 1996). This level translates to a low risk of low direct, secondary and cumulative impacts to soil productivity.

Soil Mitigations:

- Operate ground-based equipment only during periods of dry, frozen or snow-covered conditions
- Space skid trails a minimum of 60 feet apart to minimize areas impacted by ground-based equipment. Landtypes in the proposed project area are prone to impacts from soil displacement
- Use existing skid trails if they are in suitable locations to minimize potential for cumulative impacts to soil physical disturbance
- Leave approximately 4-24 tons per acre of woody material 3-inches in diameter or greater on the ground for nutrient cycling

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY: Weeksville Creek is a perennial class 1 tributary to the Clark Fork River and flows through the proposed project area. No additional stream channel reaches were identified throughout the proposed project area.

Water Quality and Quantity Existing Conditions: Weeksville Creek is a perennial, fish-bearing class 1 stream. All stream reaches were found to be stable and not actively eroding laterally or vertically. An existing ford was identified on Weeksville Creek on a historic access road. Portions of the road on the east side of Weeksville Creek have not been used recently, and are brushed in. The western approach to the ford is an actively used road by recreational users and hunters. This site is an existing sediment source to Weeksville Creek.

Water Quality & Quantity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Water Quality	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Water Quantity	**x**				**x**				**x**					
Action														
Water Quality		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**WQ-1**
Water Quantity		**x**				**x**				**x**			**Y**	**WQ-2**

Comments: **WQ-1:** All requirements found in ARM 36.11.301-313, and ARM 36.11.421-427 would be implemented, where applicable. In addition, all applicable forest management BMPs would be implemented. These measures would minimize any potential risk of sediment delivery to a stream or draw and leave a low risk of direct, secondary or cumulative impacts to water quality. All applicable BMPs, SMZ rules and HCP commitments would be implemented in order to minimize the risk of impacts to water quality. These measures would mitigate the potential impacts of proposed timber harvesting activities as well as the construction of approximately 0.74 miles of new permanent roads in the proposed project area. The west approach to the existing ford on Weeksville Creek would be rehabilitated and made impassable to motorized traffic by using a "checkerboard" ripping method. The remainder of the existing west approach road system would be permanently closed with slash and debris to eliminate motorized recreation at the site. All disturbed ground would be seeded with a quick-cover grass mix to minimize the risk of erosion and sediment delivery to Weeksville Creek.

WQ-2: There is a low risk of any proposed activities leading to increases in water quantity sufficient to destabilize any project area stream channel due to the size of the watershed relative to the proposed harvesting, the stable nature of the stream channel reaches within the proposed project areas and the well-drained nature of the soils in the project areas.

Water Quality & Quantity Mitigations:

- Minimize use of ground-based equipment in sale and draw bottoms to avoid concentration of runoff

FISHERIES:

Fisheries Existing Conditions: Weeksville Creek flows through the proposed project area. According to FishMT, Weeksville Creek contains a population of Westslope cutthroat trout.

No surface water features were identified in other portions of the proposed project area.

No-Action: No direct or indirect impacts would occur to affected fish species or affected fisheries resources beyond those described in Fisheries Existing Conditions. Cumulative effects (other related past and present factors; other future, related actions; and any impacts described in Fisheries Existing Conditions) would continue to occur.

Action Alternative (see Fisheries table below):

Fisheries	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Sediment	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Flow Regimes	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Woody Debris	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Stream Shading	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Stream Temperature	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Connectivity	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Populations	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Action														
Sediment		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**F-1**
Flow Regimes	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Woody Debris		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**F-2**
Stream Shading		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	
Stream Temperature		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	
Connectivity	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Populations		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	

Comments:

F-1: All requirements found in ARM 36.11.301-313, and ARM 36.11.421-427 would be implemented, where applicable. In addition, all applicable forest management BMPs and Montana DNRC's Habitat Conservation Plan would be implemented. A 122-foot Riparian Management Zone would be implemented on Weeksville Creek based on the 100-year site index of the Weeksville Creek riparian zone.

In addition, an existing ford on Weeksville creek would be rehabilitated and access made impassable by motorized vehicles. These measures would minimize any potential risk of sediment delivery to a fish-bearing stream and leave a low risk of direct, secondary or cumulative impacts to water quality and fish habitat.

F-2: Provided the measures listed in F-1and the mitigation measures listed in the water quality portion of this analysis are followed, there is a very low risk of adverse direct, secondary or cumulative impacts to fish populations as a result of the proposed project.

Fisheries Mitigations:

- Based on site-potential tree heights, a 122-foot riparian management zone (RMZ) would be implemented on Weeksville Creek. Harvesting is proposed within the RMZ, and an allowance to remove higher levels of RMZ trees would be used to treat ongoing insect infestations. Follow all requirements of ARM 36.11.425 to ensure woody debris, stream shading and stream temperature values are maintained.

WILDLIFE:

Wildlife Existing Conditions: The Project Area consists of a single DNRC-managed parcel totaling approximately 562 acres and is included in DNRC's Habitat Conservation Plan (USFWS and DNRC 2010). There are approximately 187 acres of mature forest stands (trees ≥9" dbh with ≥40% canopy closure) in the Project Area. Within the parcel there are approximately 47 non-forested acres that consist of small rocky outcrops, bitterbrush, and other shrubs and forbs. The remaining 328 acres consist of open stands (trees ≥9" dbh with <40% canopy closure). Approximately 268 acres have been harvested in the last 25 years under the Weeksville Creek Timber Sale (DNRC 1999) and Weeksville 612 Timber Permit (DNRC 2020). In the fall of 2025, approximately 183 acres in the southwest portion of the parcel burned in wildfire which caused mortality in approximately 30% of the trees within the fire perimeter. Forest stands in the Project Area consist primarily of Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forest types which provide a variety of habitat conditions for native wildlife species that utilize mature forest. There is no old-growth forest in the Project Area using Green et al. (1992) standards. Weeksville Creek Road is a well-traveled open road that bisects the Project Area. There are 1.2 miles of open road and 4.0 miles of restricted roads in the Project Area. There is a seasonal grazing lease on a portion of the parcel. An easement on a gated, restricted road provides access to the private residence of an adjacent landowner. Overall, public non-motorized use of this parcel is low. Cumulative effects analysis areas (CEAA) encompass lands surrounding the Project Area and include the 5,032-acre Small CEAA for animals with smaller home ranges like pileated woodpeckers and a 40,794-acre Large CEAA for animals that travel across larger areas, such as big game. Additional information on cumulative effects analysis areas and analysis methods is available upon request.

No-Action: None of the proposed activities would occur. An increase in stand-replacement wildfire risk would be anticipated. In the long-term, habitat suitability for mature forest-associated species would remain similar or increase compared to current conditions.

Action Alternative (see Wildlife table below):

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Threatened and Endangered Species														
Grizzly bear *(Ursus arctos)* Habitat: Recovery areas, security from human activity	**X**				**X**				**X**				**Y**	**WI-1**
Lynx (*Felis lynx*) Habitat: SF hab.types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-2**
Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) Habitat: open cottonwood riparian	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
forest with dense brush understories (Lake and Flathead counties)														
Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) Habitat: high elevation areas that retain high snow levels in late spring	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
Sensitive Species														
Bald eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* Habitat: Late-successional forest within 1 mile of open water		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-4**
Black-backed woodpecker *(Picoides arcticus)* Habitat: Mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
Common loon *(Gavia immer)* Habitat: Cold mountain lakes, nest in emergent vegetation	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
Fisher *(Martes pennanti)* Habitat: Dense mature to old forest less than 6,000 feet in elevation and riparian		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-5**
Flammulated owl *(Otus flammeolus)* Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-6**
Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* Habitat: Cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Pileated woodpecker *(Dryocopus pileatus)* Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest			**X**				**X**			**X**			**Y**	**WI-6**
Fringed myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*) Habitat: low elevation ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and riparian forest with diverse roost sites including outcrops, caves, mines		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-7**
Hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) Habitat: coniferous and deciduous forests and roost on foliage in trees, under bark, in snags, bridges		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-8**
Townsend's big-eared bat *(Plecotus townsendii)* Habitat: Caves, caverns, old mines	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
Big Game Species														
Elk		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-9**
Whitetail			**X**				**X**			**X**			**Y**	**WI-9**
Mule Deer		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-9**
Moose	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-9**
Bighorn sheep		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-9**

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Other														
Mature Forest				**X**				**X**		**X**			**N**	**WI-10**

Comments:
WI-1. Grizzly Bear - The Project Area is adjacent to the grizzly bear recovery zone associated with the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem and outside of any Grizzly Bear Management Unit (USFWS 1993, Wittinger 2002). While occasional presence of a grizzly bear in the Project Area is possible, appreciable use by grizzly bears would not be expected due to the absence of preferred habitat and low bear densities within the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem. The greatest risks to bears within the larger surrounding area would continue to be human habitations and associated attractants that bring bears into conflict with people. Mitigations included under the Action Alternative would require contractors to manage potential attractants to minimize conflicts.

WI-2. Canada Lynx – Approximately 36 acres (6.5% of Project Area) of suitable lynx habitat exists in the Project Area along Weeksville Creek. The remainder of the parcel lacks suitable lynx habitat types. Approximately 21 acres, or 57.4%, of suitable lynx habitat in the Project Area would be removed by the proposed Action Alternative. The proposed harvest would include approximately 4 acres of SMZ harvest and 20 acres of RMZ harvest. Due to the reduction in canopy closure, these acres would become temporarily unsuitable for lynx use after harvest. Approximately 2.8% (15 acres) of the Project Area adjacent to Weeksville Creek would remain suitable lynx habitat after harvest. To maintain some habitat connectivity through the Project Area, at least 50-feet would remain unharvested on the west side of Weeksville Creek and on the east side of the creek in unit 36-9. To ensure that forest structural attributes preferred by lynx and lynx prey (snowshoe hares) remain following harvest, patches of advanced regeneration and shade-tolerant trees would be retained within portions of suitable lynx habitat per LY-HB4.2 (USFWS and DNRC 2010). Additionally, 4 to 24 tons/acre of coarse woody debris would be retained in accordance with DNRC Forest Management Rules (ARM 36.11.414) and retention of downed logs ≥15 inch diameter would be emphasized. Potentially suitable lynx habitat would remain moderately abundant (45.2% of Large CEAA) in the Large CEAA after harvest. Connectivity of potential lynx habitat in the western portion of the Large CEAA would remain high, while connectivity in the eastern portion of the Large CEAA would remain moderate. Due to the relatively low elevation, low snowpack, lack of suitable habitat types, and absence of recent observations of lynx in the area (MNHP 2025), appreciable use of the Project Area by lynx is unlikely under either alternative.

WI-3. This species was evaluated, and it was determined that the Project Area lies outside of the normal distribution for the species, and/or suitable habitat was not found to be present.

WI-4. Bald Eagle. The Project Area is within the home range associated with the Weeksville bald eagle territory (MNHP 2025), however current occupancy of this territory is unknown. The historic nest site (MNHP 2025) is more than 0.75 miles from the proposed activities and partially screened by topography from the proposed units. This territory experiences considerable levels of human disturbance associated with Highway 200, the railroad, human residences, agricultural operations, timber management, and various forms of summer and winter recreation. Proposed activities may occur during the nesting season (February 1–August 15), or the non-nesting (August 16-February 1) season. Minor levels of disturbance to bald eagles could occur should any activities be conducted during the nesting period. To retain habitat characteristics important to bald eagles, at least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh) would be retained.

WI-5. Fisher – Approximately 21 acres (57.4% of available habitat) of suitable fisher habitat in the Project Area would be affected by the proposed activities, this includes 20 acres of RMZ and 4 acres of SMZ harvest. Due to the reduction in canopy cover, these acres would all be

temporarily unsuitable for fisher use after harvest. Existing habitat connectivity in the parcel is low due to regenerating areas that do not contain the structural complexity required by fishers and interspersed cover types that are not suitable for fisher use. Connectivity would be further reduced by harvest, and the 16 acres (2.8% of Project Area) of remaining suitable habitat would be limited to a narrow band along Weeksville Creek. Remaining suitable habitat in the Project Area would be connected to potentially suitable habitat north of the Project Area on USFS land, but there is no suitable habitat on the private land to the south. Approximately 0.74 miles of new permanent roads would be constructed in the Project Area outside of fisher habitat. Unauthorized motorized access points on both the east and west sides of the creek would be blocked. The proposed harvest would reduce potential fisher habitat in the Large CEAA by less than 1%, and after harvest 31.7% of the Large CEAA would contain potentially suitable fisher habitat. To reduce some potential adverse effects on fishers, at least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh) would be retained *(ARM 36.11.411)*. These snags and large trees are important habitat features that provide resting and denning sites for fishers (Olson 2014). There are no recent observations of fisher in the Large CEAA (MNHP 2025), however should any fishers be present within the CEAA, habitat alteration and potential disturbance would be additive to any activities occurring or planned on surrounding lands.

WI-6. Flammulated Owl – The proposed timber harvest would affect approximately 156 acres, or 27.8%, of suitable flammulated owl habitat in the Project Area. Due to the low density of mature trees that would remain after the proposed overstory removal harvest, 48 acres or 14.5% of available habitat, would be removed in the Project Area. However, the proposed individual tree selection and shelterwood prescriptions on 108 acres would favor mature seral species and would maintain more open forest stand conditions potentially beneficial to flammulated owls. In total, 285 acres (50.7% of the Project Area) of suitable flammulated owl habitat would remain in the Project Area after harvest. Harvest would reduce potential flammulated owl habitat in the Small CEAA by 2.8% and approximately 33.2% or 1,671 acres in the Small CEAA would remain relatively well-connected habitat after the proposed harvest. To retain potential nesting trees for flammulated owls, at least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh) would be retained (*ARM 36.11.411*).

WI-7. Pileated Woodpecker – There are approximately 99 acres (17.7% of Project Area) of pileated woodpecker foraging habitat in the Project Area. The current distribution, patch size, quality, and abundance of habitat in the Project Area is unlikely to support breeding pileated woodpeckers. The proposed activities would remove 59 acres of foraging habitat (59.3% of habitat in the Project Area). Proposed overstory removal, individual tree selection, and shelterwood harvests would reduce the mature canopy cover such that these stands would be unsuitable for pileated woodpecker use. After the proposed harvest, approximately 7.2% (40 acres) of the Project Area would remain as small, fragmented patches of suitable foraging habitat. To reduce potential adverse effects on pileated woodpeckers, at least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh, or largest size class available) would be retained and all snags cut for safety reasons would be left in the harvest unit (*ARM 36.11.411*). Additionally, 4 to 24 tons/per acre of downed wood would be retained. Suitable habitat in the Small CEAA would be reduced from 33.0% (1,660 acres) to 31.8% (1,601 acres). Connectivity of suitable habitat in the Small CEAA would remain high in the northwest and low to moderate elsewhere. Continued use of the Small CEAA by pileated woodpeckers would be anticipated.

WI-7 Fringed myotis – Approximately 200 acres of potential fringed myotis habitat would be affected by the proposed timber harvest. Fringed myotis utilizes a variety of habitats and roost sites including pine forests (Keinath 2004). If present in the Project Area, they could be

temporarily displaced by timber harvesting. At least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh, or largest size class available) would be retained and could provide foraging habitat. Current use of the Project Area or Small CEAA by fringed myotis is unknown, however (if present) both areas would likely remain occupied by these bats after harvest.

WI-8. Hoary bat – The proposed activities would affect approximately 200 acres of potential hoary bat habitat. Hoary bats typically roost in tree foliage (Bachen et al. 2020) and if present they could be temporarily displaced by timber harvesting. Potential disturbance would only be expected from late May through September, when hoary bats are in Montana. At least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh, or largest size class available) would be retained and could provide roosting habitat. The Project Area and Small CEAA would likely remain occupied by hoary bats during and after harvest, as hoary bats are considered common and widespread throughout Montana (Bachen et al. 2020).

WI-9. Big Game – The Project Area provides important winter range habitat for white-tailed deer, mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk (DFWP 2008). The proposed timber harvest would remove 41 acres (55.2% of available) of thermal cover/snow-intercept in the Project Area. Mature tree canopy cover on harvested acres would be reduced such that there would be little capacity of these stands to provide thermal cover during winter conditions. Thermal cover/snow-intercept would remain in small, scattered patches on approximately 33 acres, or 5.9% of the Project Area. Additionally, 89 acres (62.2% of available) of marginal thermal cover (40-60% crown closure greater than 26 feet tall) would be removed by the proposed harvest. After harvest, approximately 54 acres (9.6% of Project Area) of marginal thermal cover would remain. The overall effectiveness of remaining thermal cover and marginal thermal cover would be reduced due to small patch size and lack of connectivity. White-tailed deer would be most impacted by the reduction in thermal cover, followed by mule deer, and elk. Approximately 0.5% of thermal cover/snow-intercept in the Large CEAA would be removed by the proposed harvest and abundance of thermal cover/snow-intercept would remain low (19.6% of the Large CEAA).

The proposed activities would impact approximately 173 acres, or 59.0% of available hiding cover in the Project Area. The proposed shelterwood and individual tree selection prescriptions would remove 115 acres (39.1% of available) of hiding cover, whereas 58 acres of overstory removal would retain understory vegetation that would continue providing hiding cover, albeit less effective hiding cover. In total, approximately 179 acres, or 31.9% of the Project Area, would remain hiding cover after harvest activities. Approximately 0.74 miles of new permanent restricted road would be constructed which would decrease habitat security for big game species by facilitating non-motorized access. The increase in roads facilitating non-motorized human access combined with a reduction in hiding cover could result in increased mortality risk to big game species due to hunting. However, motorized use by the public would be restricted on all new and existing restricted roads within the Project Area. Additionally, access points on the west and east side of Weeksville Creek, which currently provide unauthorized motorized access to the creek corridor, would be closed. This would increase security for big game in the riparian corridor. Temporary disturbance or displacement of big game may occur during the proposed activities. Hiding cover in the Large CEAA would be reduced by 0.4% and remain moderately abundant (64.9% of Large CEAA). Minor changes in movement patterns of big game in proximity to the Project Area could occur within the Large CEAA.

The Thompson Falls bighorn sheep herd uses the western portion of the Project Area from December to early April (personal communication, DFWP 2025). To reduce disturbance to

bighorn sheep during the critical winter period, harvest operations in the three most western units (36-1, 36-2, 36-3, and 36-4) would be prohibited from December 1 through March 31.

WI-10. Mature Forest –The proposed harvest would remove approximately 109 acres of mature forest (62.2% of mature forest within the Project Area). Thus, these stands would no longer be suitable for wildlife species that prefer dense mature forest with more shaded canopies. However, habitat suitability for species that utilize more open forests would increase under the proposed Action Alternative. Approximately 66 acres, or 11.7% of the Project Area, would remain mature forest after harvest. Within the Project Area, remaining mature forest would occur in small, poorly connected patches. The proposed harvest would remove approximately 7.0% of existing mature forest in the Small CEAA and mature forest abundance would be reduced from 30.7% to 28.5% of the Small CEAA. Harvest would decrease connectivity through the center of the Small CEAA, and connectivity in this area would be poor. Large existing, connected patches of mature forest would remain in the northwest, and to a lesser extent, the eastern portion of the Small CEAA.

Wildlife Mitigations:

- If a threatened or endangered species is encountered, consult a DNRC biologist immediately. Similarly, if undocumented nesting raptors or wolf dens are encountered within ½ mile of the Project Area, contact a DNRC biologist.
- Contractors will adhere to food storage and sanitation requirements as described in the timber sale contract. Ensure that all attractants such as food, garbage, and petroleum products are stored in a bear-resistant manner *ARM 36.11.432(1)(d)*.
- Prohibit contractors and purchasers conducting contract operations from carrying firearms while on duty as per *ARM 36.11.432(1)(c)*.
- Effectively close restricted roads and skid trials in the Project Area via a combination of gates, kelly humps, rocks, and stumps. Maintain public motorized restrictions on restricted roads during and after harvest activities.
- Harvest operations in units 36-1, 36-2, 36-3, and 36-4 are prohibited from December 1 through March 31.
- Retain patches of advanced regeneration of shade-tolerant trees within commercial harvest units 36-5,36-6,36-7, and 36-9 per *ARM 36.11.428 (4)(f).*
- Retain at least 2 snags and 2 snag recruits per acre >21 inches dbh or the next largest available size class, particularly favoring ponderosa pine, western larch, western red cedar and Douglas-fir for retention. If snags are cut for safety concerns, they must be left in the harvest unit.
- Retain 4-24 tons/acre of coarse-woody debris according to *ARM 36.11.414* and emphasize retention of 15-inch diameter downed logs aiming for at least one 20-foot-long section per acre *ARM 36.11.428 (4)(b).*

Literature:

Bachen, D.A., A. McEwan, B. Burkholder, S. Blum, and B. Maxell. 2020. Accounts of Bat Species Found in Montana. Report to Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena, Montana. 58 p.

DFWP. 2008. Maps of moose, elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer distribution in Montana. *In* Individual GIS data layers. Available online at: https://gis-mtfwp.opendata.arcgis.com/

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DNRC. 2020. Weeksville 612 Timber Permit Environmental Assesment Checklist. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Plains MT.

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Keinath, D.A. (2004, October 29). Fringed Myotis (*Myotis thysanodes*): a technical conservation assessment. [Online]. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. Available: http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/projects/scp/assessments/ fringedmyotis.pdf 1/27/2023.

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USFWS. 1993. Grizzly bear recovery plan. Report on file at Missoula, MT. 181pp.

USFWS and DNRC. 2010. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forested Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Volumes I and II., U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6, Denver, Colorado and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Missoula, MT.

Wittinger, W.T. 2002. Grizzly bear distribution outside of recovery zones. Unpublished memorandum on file at USFS, Region 1, Missoula, Montana.

AIR QUALITY:

Air Quality	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Smoke	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Dust	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Action														
Smoke		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**AQ-1**
Dust		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**AQ-2**

Comments:
AQ-1: The proposed project is located in Montana State Airshed Class 2 as designated by the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Particulate matter may be introduced into the Airshed from the burning of logging slash. All burning would be conducted following the rules, regulations, and procedures of the DNRC major open burning permit and the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group operations guide. Impacts are expected to be minor and temporary as all slash burning would be conducted burning on days with good to excellent dispersion when smoke would not be expected to impair visibility. Therefore, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality are expected to be minimal. AQ-2: Under the action alternative, truck traffic would produce more dust than the no action alternative

Air Quality Mitigations:

- Only burn on days approved by the Montana/Idaho Airshed group and DEQ •
- Keep truck speeds down to reduce road dust

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES / AESTHETICS / DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	**x**				**x**				**x**				**N**	
Aesthetics	**x**				**x**				**x**				**N**	
Demands on Environmental	**X**				**X**				**X**					

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Resources of Land, Water, or Energy														
Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	**X**				**X**				**X**				**N**	**A-1**
Aesthetics	**X**				**X**				**x**				**N**	
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	**X**				**x**				**x**				**N**	

Comments:

A-1

- Scoping letters were sent to those Tribes that requested to be notified of DNRC timber sales. No response was returned that identified a specific cultural resource issue. A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search results revealed that no cultural resource has been documented in the APE.
- Because proposed timber harvest activities are expected to have *No Effect* to *Antiquities*. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

- Weeksville Timber Sale EA (1999)
- Weeksville 612 permit (2020)

Impacts on the Human Population

Evaluation of the impacts on the proposed action including **direct, secondary, and cumulative** impacts on the Human Population.

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Health and Human Safety	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Demand for Government Services	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Social Structures and Mores	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Action														
Health and Human Safety	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production		**X**				**X**				**X**			**No**	**HP-1**
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	**X**				**X**				**X**					

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Demand for Government Services	X				X				X					
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	X				X				X					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	X				X				X					
Social Structures and Mores	X				X				X					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	X				X				X					

Comments: N/A

Mitigations:
HP-1: According to the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research a general rule of thumb is that for every million board feet of sawtimber harvested in Montana, ten person years of employment occur in the forest products industry. This harvest is viewed as a continuation of a sustained yield and as such would not create any new jobs but rather sustain approximately 8 person years of employment in the forest products industry. A few short-term jobs would also be created/sustained by issuing contracts following harvest. Additionally, local businesses, such as hotels, grocery stores, and gas stations would likely receive additional revenues from personnel working on the proposed project. This would be a positive low impact to quantity and distribution of employment in the area.

Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals:

- No

Other Appropriate Social and Economic Circumstances:

Costs, revenues and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives. They are not intended to be used as absolute estimates of return. The estimated stumpage is based on comparable sales analysis. This method compares recent sales to find a market value for stumpage. These sales have similar species, quality, average diameter, product mix, terrain, date of sale, distance from mills, road building and logging systems, terms of sale, or anything that could affect a buyer's willingness to pay.

No Action: The No Action alternative would not generate any return to the Common School trust at this time.

Action: The timber harvest would generate additional revenue for the Common Schools Trust. The estimated return to the trust for the proposed harvest is $145,065 based on an estimated

harvest of 1.725 million board feet (9,655 tons) and an overall stumpage value of $15 per ton. Costs, revenues, and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives, they are not intended to be used as absolute estimates of return.

References

DNRC 1996. State forest land management plan: final environmental impact statement (and appendixes). Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Forest Management Bureau, Missoula, Montana.

DNRC. 2010. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan: Final EIS, Volume II, Forest Management Bureau, Missoula, Montana.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?
No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?
No

Environmental Assessment Checklist Prepared By:

Name: Nate Weaver
Title: Management Forester
Date: 4/6/2026

Finding

Alternative Selected
The Action Alternative is selected for implementation.

Significance of Potential Impacts
No significant impacts were identified in the development of this project.

Need for Further Environmental Analysis

[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

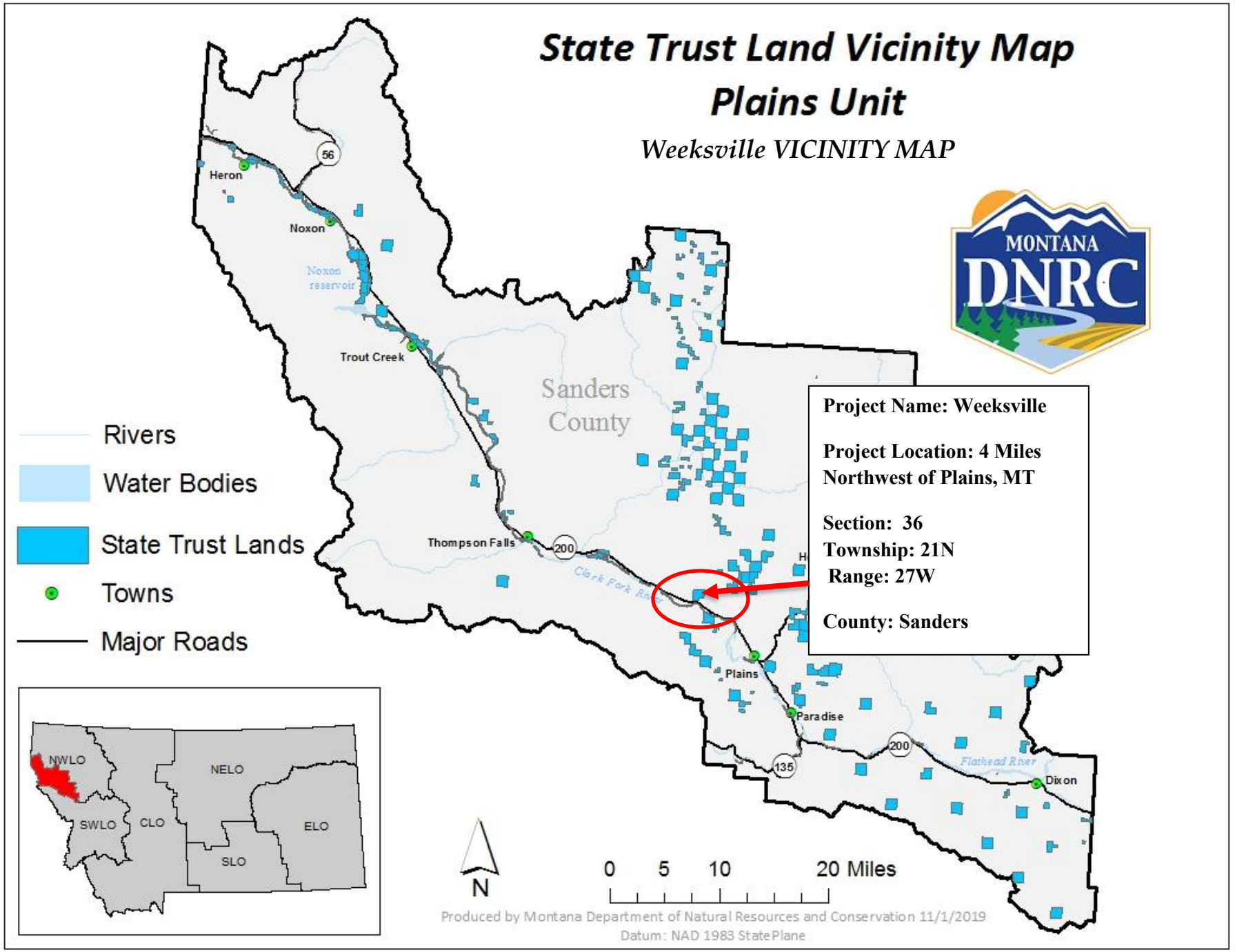
Environmental Assessment Checklist Approved By:

Name: David M. Olsen
Title: Plains Unit Program Manager
Date: May 4, 2026

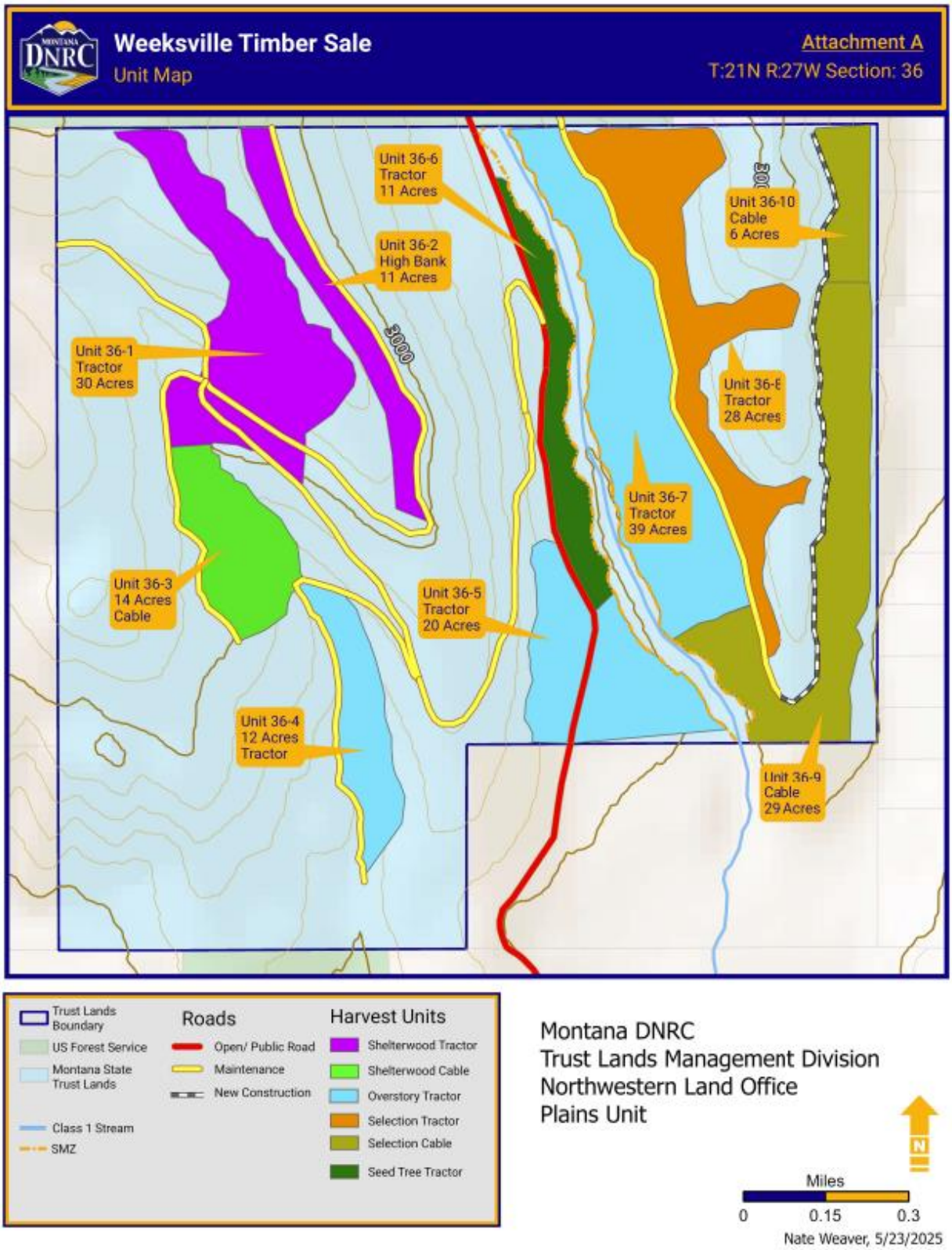
Signature: David M. Olsen

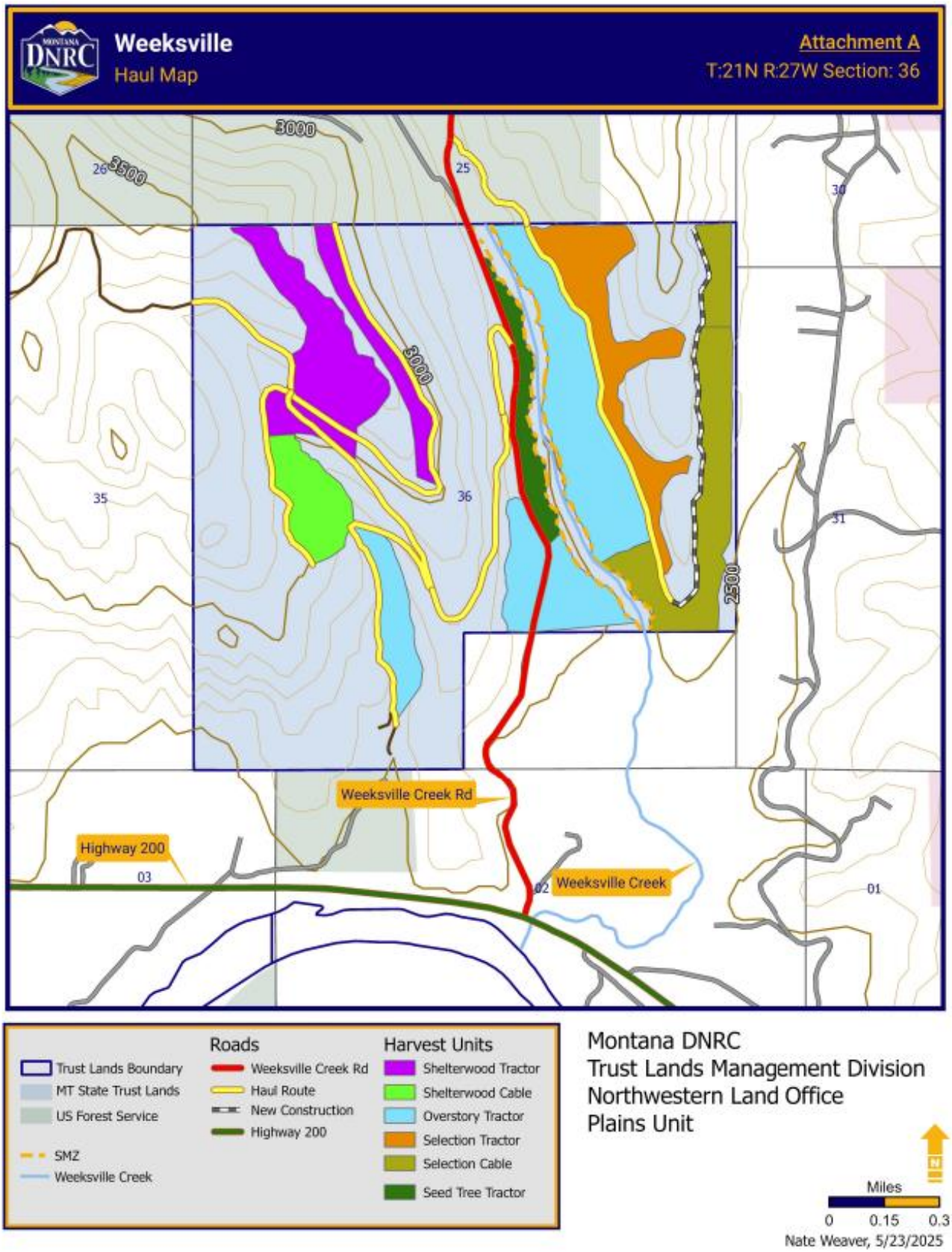
Attachment A - Maps

A-1: Timber Sale Vicinity Map



A-2: Timber Sale Harvest Units




Weeksville
Haul Map
Attachment A
T:21N R:27W Section: 36
3000
3500
3000
2500
25
26
30
35
36
31
01
02
03
Weeksville Creek Rd
Highway 200
Weeksville Creek
Trust Lands Boundary
MT State Trust Lands
US Forest Service
SMZ
Weeksville Creek
Roads
Weeksville Creek Rd
Haul Route
New Construction
Highway 200
Harvest Units
Shelterwood Tractor
Shelterwood Cable
Overstory Tractor
Selection Tractor
Selection Cable
Seed Tree Tractor
Montana DNRC
Trust Lands Management Division
Northwestern Land Office
Plains Unit
N
Miles
0
0.15
0.3
Nate Weaver, 5/23/2025

Attachment B – Silvicultural Prescriptions

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-1, 2

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 41
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 5
TRS: 21N 27W S36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 216

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Douglas Fir	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/SYAL	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 100-149	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION

Single storied stand of PP and DF approximately 60" tall, generally <15" dbh, and ~100 years old. The west side of the ridge is composed primarily of PP, while DF increases on the East side of the ridge. DF is suppressed and has poor vigor and crown ratio (<25%). PSME/SYAL habitat type west of the ridge transitioning to PSME/PHMA with decreasing elevation on the East side of the ridge. Warm to Moderately warm and dry habitat type groups. Frequent low-to-mixed severity fire regimes.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS

Regeneration of the stand is the primary objective. Leave trees on a 50-55ft spacing. Site prep may be needed to address ninebark and create a suitable seedbed of exposed soil for natural regeneration.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Shelterwood	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Tractor

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION

15 TPA, 50-55ft spacing for leave trees
Unit 36-1: Leave trees marked with horizontal blue stripe
Unit 36-2: Leave Trees Designation by description.
Species Preference PP, WL, DF
Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-3

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 14
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY 27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 4.3
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 48

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/PHMA	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 040-099	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION
Line Unit. Multi-storied stand composed of PP and DF. PSME/PHMA habitat type. Moderately warm and dry habitat type group. Frequent low-to-mixed severity fire regime. Overstory is spaced well and does not open up much. SE aspect.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS
Desired even aged class structure of residual stand. Focus on retention of desirable overstory trees at a consistent 50-55ft spacing to create space for regeneration throughout unit while providing shade to moderate temperature at ground level. Skyline corridors will provide the best opportunity for natural regeneration.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Shelterwood	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Cable

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION
15 TPA, 50-55ft spacing for leave trees. Leave Trees Designation by Description. Species Preference PP, WL, DF Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-4

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 12
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 10.5
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 125

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/SYAL	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 040-099	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION
Multi-storied stand dominated by PP 16-24' dbh and 70-80' height. Codominant DF <16" dbh and 70' height. DF intermediate 50-6-' height. Patches of advanced DF up to 15' height. 80 feet basal area. No significant forest insect or disease issues. PSME/SYAL habitat type. Warm and Dry habitat type group. Frequent low-to-mixed severity fire regime. Overstory removal would be appropriate.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS
Overstory removal focusing on protecting existing regen.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Overstory Removal	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Cable

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION
Overstory Removal. 8 TPA, 75ft spacing Leave trees marked with a horizontal blue stripe. Species Preference PP, WL, DF Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-5,7

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 59
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 9.6
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 607

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/PHMA	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 100-149	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION
Multi Storied stand dominated by PP 16-24"dbh and 70-80' height. Codominant <16" dbh and 70' height. WL/DF intermediate 50-60' height. Patches of advanced DF and WL regen up to 15' height. 80 feet basal area. No significant forest insect or disease issues. PSME'PHMA habitat type. Moderately warm and dry habitat type group. Frequent low-to-mixed severity natural fire regime. +

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS
Overstory removal focusing on protecting existing regen.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Overstory Removal	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Tractor

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION
Overstory Removal. 4 TPA, 100-105ft spacing Leave trees marked with horizontal blue stripe. Species Preference PP, WL, DF Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-6

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 11
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 9.2
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 106

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Mixed Conifer	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: ABGR/THPL	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 100-149	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION
Multi Storied stand immediately adjacent to Weeksville Creek. Dominated by PP and DF with codominant WL and occasional RC, 17+" dbh and 80-90' height. Declining vigor GF in all canopy levels. AGBR and THPL habitat types. Warm and Moist habitat type group. Mixed severity natural fire regime.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS
Primary objective is to establish regeneration. Shelterwood favoring PP, WL, and DF at 75ft spacing. This would also address the issues with GF. Mechanical site prep may be necessary to reduce the duff layer and create an exposed seedbed of mineral soil for natural regeneration.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Seed Tree	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Tractor

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION
8 TPA, 75ft Spacing for leave trees. Leave trees marked with horizontal blue stripe. Species Preference PP, WL, DF Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-8

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 28
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY 2027	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 12
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 339

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/PHMA	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 040-099	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION
Multi Storied stand dominated by PP 16-24"dbh and 70-80' height. Codominant <16" dbh and 70' height. WL/DF intermediate 50-60' height. Patches of advanced DF and WL regen up to 15' height. 80 feet basal area. No significant forest insect or disease issues. PSME'PHMA habitat type. Moderately warm and dry habitat type group. Frequent low-to-mixed severity natural fire regime.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS
Individual Tree Selection to maintain a multi-storied stand of PP/WL/DF. Retain ~50 BA distributed as individuals, clumps, and openings of favored species with good form in all size classes. Favor PP and WL over DF and favor good form over spacing. Dispersed skidding to expose mineral soil and prepare a seedbed for natural regeneration. Future entries should perpetuate a multi-storied stand consistent with the natural disturbance regime of the site.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Individual Tree Selection	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Tractor

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION
34 TPA, 35-40ft spacing Leave Trees Designated by Horizontal Blue Stripe Species Preference PP, WL, DF Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**
Regeneration Type: Natural		

SILVICULTURAL PRESCRIPTION

Timber Sale: Weeksville

Cutting Unit: 36-9, 10

EA/EIS: Weeksville Timber Sale

Field Contact: Nate Weaver

Land Office: NWLO	**Sale Type:** Timber Sale	**Acres:** 35
Unit Office: PLN	**Planned Sale Date:** FY 27	**Expected MBF/Acre:** 7.7
TRS: 21N 27W 36	**Planned FY:** 2027	**Est. Harvest Volume (MBF):** 229

BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION	
Losensky Cover Type: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth:** No
Desired Future Condition: Ponderosa Pine	**Old Growth Rx:** N/A
Habitat Type Group: PSME/PHMA	**Pre-Harvest Est. Old Growth Acres:** N/A
Age Class: 100-149	**Post Harvest Est Old Growth Acres:** N/A

UNIT/STAND DESCRIPTION

Multi Storied stand dominated by PP 16-24"dbh and 70-80' height. Codominant <16" dbh and 70' height. WL/DF intermediate 50-60' height. Patches of advance DF and WL regen up to 15' height. 80 feet basal area. No significant forest insect or disease issues. PSME'PHMA habitat type. Moderately warm and dry habitat type group. Frequent low-to-mixed severity natural fire regime.

TARGET STAND CONDITIONS

Individual Tree Selection to maintain a multi-storied stand of PP/WL/DF. Retain ~50 BA distributed as individuals, clumps, and openings of favored species with good form in all size classes. Favor PP and WL over DF and favor good form over spacing. Dispersed skidding to expose mineral soil and prepare a seedbed for natural regeneration. Future entries should perpetuate a multi-storied stand consistent with the natural disturbance regime of the site.

PRESCRIBED TREATMENT		
Silvicultural Treatment: Individual Tree Selection	**EA/EIS Alternative:**	**Harvest Method:** Cable

LEAVE/CUT TREE INFORMATION

31 TPA, 35-40ft spacing
Leave Trees are Designation by Description
Species Preference PP, WL, DF
Number of Snags/ Snag Recruits: 2 snags/ 2 snag recruits per acre

SITE PREP and REGENERATION		
Site Prep Method: Timber Sale/ Dispersed Skidding	**Site Prep Accomplished By**: Timber Harvest	**Site Prep Date:**