Environmental Assessment Checklist

Project Name: Davis Mountain
Proposed Implementation Date: November 2025
Proponent: Kalispell Unit, Northwest Land Office, Montana DNRC
County: Lincoln

Type and Purpose of Action

Description of Proposed Action:

The Kalispell Unit of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is proposing the Davis Mountain Timber Project. The project is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Libby, MT (refer to Attachments vicinity map A-**1** and project map A-**2**) and includes the following sections:

Beneficiary	Legal Description	Total Acres	Treated Acres
Common Schools	**T27N, R28W, S36**	**640**	**514**
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:

- Promote a healthy, productive forest and return the area to more historic forest conditions
- Reduce fuel loading and increase the stand's fire resiliency
- Generate revenue for the Common School Trust.

Proposed activities include:

Action	Quantity
Proposed Harvest Activities	# Acres
Individual Tree Selection	514
Shelterwood	
Selection	
Old Growth Maintenance/Restoration	
Commercial Thinning	
Salvage	
Total Treatment Acres	
Proposed Forest Improvement Treatment	# Acres
Weed Spraying	20
Site preparation/scarification	
Pile burning	514
Proposed Road Activities	# Miles
New permanent road construction	0
New temporary road construction	0
Road maintenance	9.2
Road reconstruction	0
Road abandoned	0
Road reclaimed	0
Other Activities	

Duration of Activities:	2 years
Implementation Period:	Winter 2025

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:

- April 22, 2025
- PUBLIC SCOPED:
  - The scoping notice was posted on the DNRC Website: https://dnrc.mt.gov/News/scoping-notices
  - Adjacent landowners, statewide scoping list.
- AGENCIES SCOPED:
  - Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MT FWP), statewide tribal agencies, and internal DNRC staff.
- COMMENTS RECEIVED:
  - How many: 1 (internal comment from staff archaeologist).
  - Concerns: No concerns were raised during public scoping.
  - Results: A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). No known cultural resources are present.

DNRC specialists were consulted, including:
Patrick Rennie, Archaeologist
Victoria Forristal, Wildlife Biologist
Tony Nelson, Hydrologist

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.

- **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.

- **Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (DFWP)**
  - DNRC will need a road use permit on approximately 1.55 miles of existing road located on MT FWP ownership.
- **SPP Montana LLC**
  - DNRC will need a road use permit on approximately 1.4 miles of existing road located on SPP Montana LLC ownership.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No-Action Alternative: No timber harvest activities would occur. Forest succession would continue to be influenced by the occurrence of natural events such as insect and disease outbreaks, windthrow, or wildland fire. No road maintenance or improvements would occur, except for those occurring on roads currently open to the public or those with existing easements.

Action Alternative : Timber harvest activities would occur on 514 acres and implement individual tree selection prescriptions. Forest health and vigor would be improved in all treated acres, and fuel loading in the wildland urban interface (WUI) would be reduced. Timber would be harvested using traditional ground-based logging systems. The transportation plan would utilize approximately 9.2 miles of existing road.

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
1	Moderately cool and moist (westside)	Mixed	Western Larch/Douglas Fir	40-99	Western Larch/Douglas Fir	Individual/Select Tree Harvest	514

Fire Hazard/Fuels: This project area is within the wildland urban interface (WUI). The stand contains continuous fuels that pose a hazard to nearby residencies. The proposed silvicultural prescriptions aim to reduce the amount of fuel loading in the area as well as promote fire resistance and resilience.

Insects and Diseases: Dwarf mistletoe in Douglas-fir and western larch are scattered throughout the harvest unit. Bark beetles are prevalent in lodgepole pine and are causing mortality. The proposed silvicultural prescription has been designed to manage these insect and disease concerns.

Sensitive/Rare Plants: None identified.

Noxious Weeds: Spotted Knapweed, orange hawkweed, Oxeye daisy, sulfur cinquefoil.

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					
Age Class	X				X				X					
Old Growth	X				X				X					
Fire/Fuels		X				X				X			Y	V-1
Insects/Disease		X				X				X			Y	V-2
Rare Plants	X				X				X					
Noxious Weeds		X				X				X			Y	V-3
Action														
Current Cover/DFCs	X				X				X					
Age Class	X				X				X					
Old Growth	X				X				X					
Fire/Fuels			X				X				X		Y	V-1
Insects/Disease		X				X				X			Y	V-2
Rare Plants	X				X				X					
Noxious Weeds		X				X				X			Y	V-3

Comments:

V-1: No action would result in no tree thinning and fuel reduction, potentially increasing the likelihood of more severe wildfire in the project area. Wildfire risk and severity can be reduced by thinning overstory trees and reducing fuel loadings.

V-2: Not removing trees currently infected with insects or diseases will likely cause the infection to spread to uninfected trees as well as regeneration. This may lead to a decrease in forest health and vigor in the stand. Thinning of overstory trees and removal of infected/diseased trees will improve forest health and increase vigor.

V-3: The spread of noxious weeds may continue even in the absence of timber harvest activities due to public traffic and weed population providing seed sources on adjacent lands. Existing weed populations can be treated by herbicide spraying. Harvest operations may facilitate the spread of new populations of noxious weeds. Grass seeding disturbed area after harvest operations can help prevent the establishment of new weed populations.

Vegetation Mitigations: DNRC plans to complete herbicide treatments of noxious weeds on the state parcel and segments of the access roads on adjacent ownerships to control existing weed infestations. All equipment would be washed and inspected prior to the start of work. All new roads would be reseeded to site adapted grass to reduce the threat of noxious weed spread. Project areas would be monitored for noxious weeds after harvest operations are complete, and herbicide treatments may be applied if needed.

Commercial timber harvest operations will widen the crown spacing between residual trees and reduce the potential for crown fires. Treatment of remaining forest fuels will lessen the risk for severe wildfires.

Removing insect infected and diseased trees will improve the health and vigor of the residual trees.

SOIL DISTURBANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY:

Soil Disturbance and Productivity Existing Conditions: The proposed project area has approximately 9.2 miles of existing road that would be proposed for use. These roads are moderate standard forest roads that generally meet applicable BMPs. Timber management has been conducted in the proposed project area since the 1950s, and the most recent timber sale in the project area was completed in 1983. Existing skid trails from the prior entry have mainly ameliorated due to root penetration and frost action and impacts from past entries are not readily apparent. No existing sources of erosion or sediment delivery were identified during field reconnaissance.

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: Based on DNRC soil monitoring on similar soils with a similar harvest intensity, approximately 13.6% of area may be in an impacted condition (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 yarding operations. Risk of erosion would be mitigated by implementing all applicable BMPs to harvesting activities.

S-3: Based on research by Graham, et. al. (1994), habitat types found in the project area should have 7-25 tons/acre of coarse woody debris for nutrient cycling. Currently, much of the proposed project area is at or near this range. Logging residue left on the ground as mitigation would likely have a positive effect on nutrient cycling and improve the project area over the current condition.

S-4: Soil productivity would be impacted by the use of ground-based machinery to yard timber. As stated in comment **S-1**, levels of ground disturbance are expected to be less than 13.6% 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
- Use existing skid trails if they are in suitable locations to minimize potential for cumulative impacts to soil physical disturbance
- Leave approximately 7-25 tons of woody material 3-inches in diameter or greater on the ground for nutrient cycling

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY:

The proposed project area contains two unnamed class 2 tributaries to Upper Thompson Lake. Both are perennial but become subsurface prior to reaching another stream or lake. No fish were observed in either channel during field reconnaissance. No other stream channels were identified in the proposed project area by DNRC personnel, including a DNRC hydrologist, in 2024 or 2025. Channels were found to be stable and not actively eroding.

Water Quality and Quantity Existing Conditions: All ditch relief and draw crossing structures were found to be functioning properly and meet applicable BMPs. One site was a stream crossing structure that had been removed and the site rehabilitated. This site is located in the southeast corner of the proposed project area. It is well armored, well vegetated and is not a sediment source. None of the structures reviewed were identified as a source of sediment. All were well vegetated and stable at the time of field review.

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.

WQ-2: There is a very low risk of any proposed activities leading to increases in water quantity sufficient to destabilize any project area stream channel due to the low intensity of the proposed harvest prescriptions.

Water Quality & Quantity Mitigations:

- Avoid use of ground-based equipment in the bottoms of draws to reduce risk of scour, compaction or routing of surface runoff in draws
- Implement all applicable BMPs and SMZ Law rules to ensure protection of project area streams

FISHERIES:

Fisheries Existing Conditions: No fish were identified in any of the streams in the proposed project area during field reconnaissance. All identified stream channels were perennial class 2 streams with no connection or contribution to any downstream water. A review of the FishMT web site shows no fish have been identified in any of the project area streams.

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					
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					

Comments: Since the perennial class 2 streams found in the proposed project area do not contribute flow to any other body of water and do not contain fish, no impacts to any fish habitat outside of the project area would occur with this project.

WILDLIFE:

Wildlife Existing Conditions: The Project Area consists of a single DNRC-managed parcel totaling 640 acres which is included in DNRC's Habitat Conservation Plan (USFWS and DNRC 2010). Wildlife habitat within the Project Area is comprised of conditions favoring native wildlife species that utilize closed-canopy mature forest. The Project Area contains 373 acres of mature forest stands (trees ≥9" dbh with ≥40% crown closure) consisting primarily of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, western larch, and lodgepole pine. There are approximately 17 acres of wetlands, and the remaining 250 acres consists of well-stocked regenerating, submerchantable timber with a relatively closed canopy. There is no old-growth forest in the Project Area using Green et al. (1992) standards. The Project Area is bordered by heavily managed private timber industry land. There are 5.8 miles of existing restricted roads within the parcel that receive some unauthorized ATV use and there is evidence of some illegal firewood cutting. Non-motorized use of the parcel is low but likely increases during hunting season. Cumulative effects analysis areas (CEAA) encompass lands near the Project Area and include the 5,006-acre Small CEAA for animals with smaller home ranges like pileated woodpeckers, a 39,3234-acre Large CEAA

for animals that travel across larger areas such as big game. Additional information on cumulative effects analysis areas and analysis methods are available upon request. Overall, conditions within the Project Area support wildlife species using habitat with mature trees and more dense forest.

No-Action Alternative: None of the proposed activities would occur. In the short-term, forest insects and disease will likely continue to kill some lodgepole pine. 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**					**WI-1**
Canada Lynx (*Felis lynx*) Habitat: SF hab.types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone			**X**				**X**			**X**				**WI-2**
Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) Habitat: open cottonwood riparian forest with dense brush understories (Lake and Flathead counties)	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
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**					**WI-3**
Black-backed woodpecker	**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		
(Picoides arcticus) Habitat: Mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest														
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-4**
Flammulated owl *(Otus flammeolus)* Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**WI-5**
Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* Habitat: Cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
Pileated woodpecker *(Dryocopus pileatus)* Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest	**X**				**X**				**X**					**WI-3**
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**					**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		
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**			**Y**	**WI-9**
Other														
Mature Forest				**X**				**X**			**X**		**N**	**WI-10**

Comments:

WI-1. Grizzly Bear – The Project Area is not within a recovery zone and is over 4 miles from non-recovery occupied habitat (Wittinger 2002). While occasional presence of a grizzly bear in the parcel is possible, appreciable use by grizzly bears would not be expected. As grizzly bears continue to expand their range outside of recovery zones, bears could occasionally travel through the parcel during their long-range movements, but appreciable changes to potential movement patterns would not be anticipated.

WI-2. Canada Lynx – Approximately 468 acres of suitable lynx habitat (83.0% of existing suitable habitat in the Project Area) would be altered by the proposed Action Alternative. Where the individual tree selection prescription calls for retention of 65-70 trees/acre and for the retention of submerchantable timber, total crown closure of ≥40% would be maintained. Therefore, these areas would continue to provide suitable lynx habitat immediately post-harvest, albeit the quality of some habitat attributes would be reduced. In the areas where the prescription calls for removal of lodgepole and whitewoods (i.e., Engleman spruce, grand fir), lynx habitat would become temporarily unsuitable due to the reduction in canopy closure to <40%. Post-harvest, approximately 60% of the Project Area would remain suitable lynx habitat and habitat connectivity would be maintained through the core of the Project Area. Suitable lynx habitat would remain moderately abundant and relatively well-connected in the Large CEAA after harvest. 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. Additionally, 7 to 25 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. Recent observations of lynx in the vicinity are lacking (MNHP 2025) and the

likelihood of appreciable use by lynx is low, however any lynx that might be using the Project Area could be displaced for up to four years by the proposed activities.

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. Fisher - Approximately 383 acres of suitable fisher habitat would be affected by the proposed activities (82.7% of fisher habitat available in the Project Area; 5.9% of habitat in the Large CEAA). Due to the reduction in canopy cover, all these acres would become temporarily unsuitable for fisher use post-harvest and habitat connectivity through the harvest unit would be removed. Post-harvest, 12.5% of the Project Area (80 acres) would remain well-connected suitable fisher habitat. However, due to the lack of suitable fisher habitat on adjacent lands in the Large CEAA, the remaining fisher habitat in the Project Area would be isolated from other habitat patches and unlikely to support fisher due to their large home ranges. 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). No new roads would be constructed, and existing roads would continue to be restricted by gates or berms. Suitable fisher habitat would remain in 15.7% (6,160 acres) of the Large CEAA, primarily on public lands. Should any fishers be present within the Large CEAA, habitat alteration and potential disturbance would be additive to any activities occurring or planned on surrounding lands. However, the likelihood of fishers using the Project Area or CEAA is low given the lack fisher observations in the area (MNHP 2025, Krohner 2022) and scarcity of suitable habitat in the CEAA.

WI-5. Flammulated Owl – The proposed timber harvest would affect approximately 45 acres (77.6% of potential habitat in the Project Area, 39.7% of habitat in the Small CEAA) of preferred flammulated owl cover types. Approximately 16 of these acres (27.6% of preferred cover types in Project Area) are currently too young and dense to be suitable for flammulated owl use and will remain unsuitable after harvest. Tree density on the other 29 acres would be reduced and mature seral species would be favored, which would create more open forest stand conditions potentially beneficial to flammulated owls. After harvest, approximately 42.0 acres (6.6% of Project Area) would remain suitable for flammulated owl use. At least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruitment trees per acre (>21 inches dbh) would be retained (*ARM 36.11.411*) to provide potential nesting trees for flammulated owls. Suitable flammulated owl habitat within the Small CEAA would remain low (1.9% of Small CEAA) and fragmented. By reducing stand density, habitat suitability for flammulated owls would improve compared to existing conditions. Overall, minor beneficial impacts to flammulated owls would be expected under the Action Alternative.

WI-8. Hoary bat – The proposed activities would affect approximately 514 acres of potential hoary bat habitat. Because hoary bats typically roost in tree foliage, 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. After the conclusion of activities, continued use of harvested areas by hoary bats would be anticipated. 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.

WI-9. Big Game – The Project Area is considered winter range for mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk (DWFP 2008). The proposed timber harvest would impact 59 acres of thermal cover (69.0% of thermal cover available in the Project Area) and 431 acres of marginal thermal cover (67.3% of marginal thermal cover available in the Project Area). After harvest, mature crown closure would be reduced such that there would be little capacity of treated stands to provide

thermal cover during winter conditions. Thermal cover/snow intercept would remain on approximately 26 unharvested acres (4.1% of the Project Area) and marginal thermal cover would remain on 61 acres (9.6% of Project Area) and would provide some winter cover for ungulates in the Project Area. Hiding cover quality would be reduced on all 514 harvested acres (82.8% of available hiding cover). Of these acres, hiding cover would be removed on approximately 206 acres where white woods (i.e., grand fir, Engleman spruce) or lodgepole pine stands are removed. On the remaining 308 harvested acres, patches of hiding cover would remain where 65-70 leave trees/acre and submerchantable trees are retained. No new roads will be built, and motorized use by the public would continue to be restricted on all roads within the Project Area. Additionally, a closure to reduce illegal off road vehicle use would be installed in the northern portion of the Project Area. The proposed harvest would remove 1.5% of thermal cover and 1.1% of marginal thermal cover in the Large CEAA, and the abundance of thermal cover (9.7% of CEAA) and marginal thermal cover (19.5% of CEAA) would remain low primarily due to past timber harvest on private lands. The proposed harvest would remove the largest patch of thermal and marginal thermal cover in the northern portion of the Large CEAA. This could reduce the number of wintering ungulates in this portion of the Large CEAA because ungulates would seek high quality thermal cover elsewhere. Hiding cover in the Large CEAA would remain abundant and widespread. Measurable big game population changes at the scale of the Large CEAA would not be expected as a result of the Action Alternative.

WI-10. Mature Forest – The proposed action would alter approximately 322 acres of mature forest (86.3% of mature forest within the Project Area). Harvested acres would no longer be considered mature forest because overstory crown closure would be < 40% and mature forest connectivity would be removed within the harvested area. Therefore, these stands would no longer be suitable for most 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. Post-harvest, mature forest would remain on 51 acres (8.0% of Project Area) located primarily in the southern portion of the Project Area. The remaining mature forest would not be connected to any substantial patches of mature forest on adjacent lands in the Small CEAA and would become isolated and unsuitable for species that require larger tracts of mature forest. In the Small CEAA, existing mature forest is limited (12.6% of Small CEAA) and fragmented due to past timber harvest on private lands. The majority (59.3%) of the mature forest in the Small CEAA is currently located in the Project Area. The proposed harvest would remove approximately 51.2% of existing mature forest in the Small CEAA. After harvest, the Small CEAA would contain approximately 307 acres (6.1% of Small CEAA) of poorly connected mature forest, primarily adjacent to Upper Thompson Lake. Reductions in mature forest would be additive to forest management activities occurring at a broader spatial scale.

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.
- 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.
- Retain patches of advanced regeneration of shade-tolerant trees for lynx habitat as 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 and Douglas-fir for retention. If snags are cut for safety concerns, they must be left in the harvest unit.
- Retain 7-25 tons/acre of coarse-woody debris and emphasize retention of 15-inch diameter downed logs, aiming for at least one 20-foot-long section per acre (USFWS and DNRC 2010).

Literature:

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.hub.arcgis.com/

Green, P., J. Joy, D. Sirucek, W. Hann, A. Zack, and B. Naumann. 1992. Old Growth Forest Types of the Northern Region. R-1 SES. USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, Missoula MT 60pp.

Krohner, J. M., Lukacs, P. M., Inman, R., Sauder, J. D., Gude, J. A., Mosby, C., Coltrane, J. A., Mowry, R. A. and J. J. Millspaugh. 2022. Finding fishers: determining fisher occupancy in the Northern Rocky Mountains. The Journal of Wildlife Management, 86(2): 1-20.

MNHP. 2025. Natural Heritage Map Viewer. Montana Natural Heritage Program. Retrieved on July 16, 2025, from http://mtnhp.org/MapViewer.

Olson, L. E., J. D. Sauder, N. M. Albrecht, R. S. Vinkey, S. A. Cushman, and M. K. Schwartz. 2014. Modeling the effects of dispersal and patch size on predicted fisher (*Pekania [Martes] pennanti*) distribution in the U.S. Rocky Mountains. Biological Conservation 169:89-98.

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 U.S. Forest Service, 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-1**

Comments:
AQ-1: Smoke will be created from pile burning and dust may be created from log hauling operations

Air Quality Mitigations: Burning would occur on days approved by the Montana/Idaho Airshed group and DEQ. Conduct test burn to verify good dispersal. Dust abatement may be used as necessary. Slower speed limits may be included in contracts as necessary to reduce 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**					
Aesthetics	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites		**X**				**X**				**X**			**Y**	**A-1**
Aesthetics	**X**				**X**				**X**					
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	**X**				**X**				**X**					

Comments:
A-1. Timber harvest activity and associated road work could disturb archaeological resources.

Mitigations: All THPO offices throughout the state have been notified of this project. Currently, the DNRC has no record of cultural resources in the area of potential effect, and other THPOs have not identified tribal cultural resources there. Because of extensive past logging activities on this parcel, the DNRC will only conduct a Class I (records search) review of the area of potential effect. However, if an unanticipated cultural resource is discovered, all project related activities will cease until the resource can be adequately evaluated.

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.*

- N/A

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					
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	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		
Recreational and Wilderness Activities														
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: No direct, secondary, or cumulative impacts are expected as a result of the action alternative.

Mitigations: N/A

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.*

- N/A

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 trust at this time.

Action: The timber harvest would generate additional revenue for the Common School Trust. The estimated return to the trust for the proposed harvest is $406,275.00 based on an estimated harvest of 2.23 million board feet (16,251 tons) and an overall stumpage value of $25 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: Pete Seigmund
Title: Forest Management Supervisor
Date: July 1, 2025

Finding

Alternative Selected
The Action Alternative

Significance of Potential Impacts
I find that the impacts of the proposed action alternative as described in this Environmental Assessment are not significant. This Environmental Analysis has been completed for the Davis Mountain Timber Sale. After a thorough review of the EA, project file, responses/discussions with Department and outside specialists, Department policies, standards, and guidelines, the State Land Management Rules, and the HCP rules, I have made the decision to choose the action alternative. I believe this EA has provided a good approximation of what this project would accomplish. Harvesting timber from this section would remove diseased and dying trees from the area, improve the health and vigor of the remaining trees, mimic natural disturbance patterns, and help move the forest towards more historic stand conditions. Management activities would also help reduce fuel loading and continuity in the WUI, as well as generate revenue for the Common Schools trusts.

Need for Further Environmental Analysis

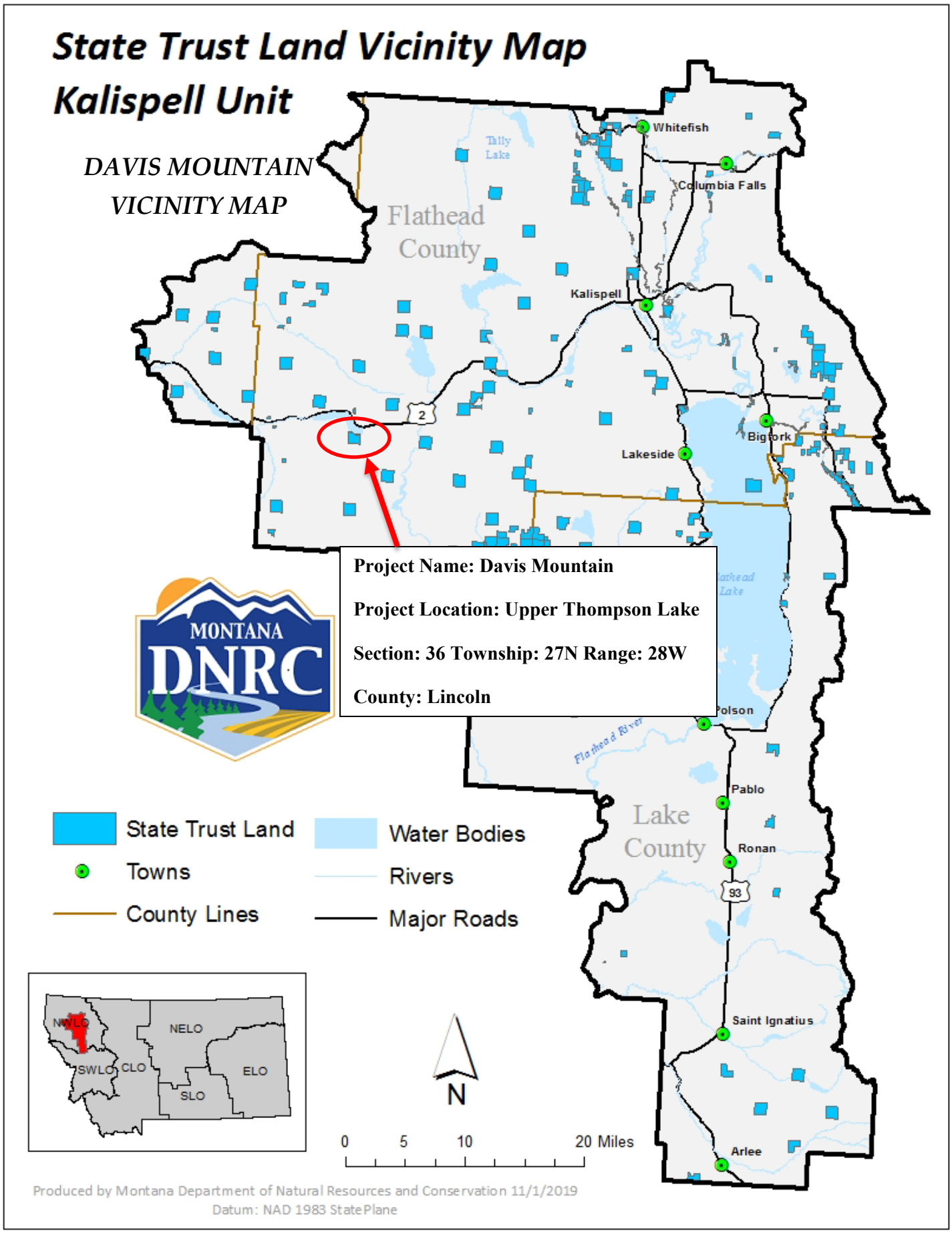
[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

Environmental Assessment Checklist Approved By:

Name: David M. Poukish
Title: Kalispell Unit Manager
Date: 8/19/25
Signature: /s/ David M. Poukish

Attachment A - Maps

A-1: Timber Sale Vicinity Map



A-2: Timber Sale Harvest Units