

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Alkali Coulee Timber Permit Proposed Implementation Date: Fall-Winter 2010

Proponent: DNRC, Northeastern Land Office

Type and Purpose of Action: Selectively harvest up to approximately 100 MBF (700 tons) of Ponderosa Pine sawlogs on approximately 60 acres. The harvest will remove over mature trees susceptible to disease and pine beetles and improve forest health.

Location: Sec 36 T18N R16E

County: Fergus

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Deerfield Hutterite Colony, Lease #5875; Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist; all adjacent landowners were notified and asked for input.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, Montana Forestry Best Management Practices, 1991; Montana State Forest Land Management Rules, 2003.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p><u>No Action Alternative:</u> This alternative would postpone timber harvest at this time. Probable effects of this alternative would be increased risk of disease and pine beetle damage and increased risk of stand replacing wildfire.</p> <p><u>Action Alternative:</u> Selectively harvest up to approximately 100 MBF (700 tons) of Ponderosa Pine sawlogs from approximately 60 acres. Forest health would be improved by leaving the best quality merchantable trees at a 30-40 foot spacing. This alternative would produce income for the School Trust Fund and decrease the risk of disease and insect damage and stand replacing wildfire.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES N = Not present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below)
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] There are no fragile or unstable soils present at the proposed location. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of this proposed action. Harvesting would be done with ground based equipment during dry times of the year, periods of adequate snow cover or frozen conditions in accordance with Montana BMPs for Forestry. Approximately 3500 feet of road construction would be necessary.
5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] No important surface or groundwater resources present. No potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The air quality impacts will be mitigated by initiating slash disposal during seasonal burning periods and completed in accordance with procedures established by the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The conifer overstory will be temporarily altered as a result of selective timber harvest. No rare plants or cover types are present. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] There is no substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] There are no federally listed threatened or endangered species of identified habitat present. No wetlands. No sensitive species or species of special concern. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Consulted Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist. No record of cultural resource sites in the sale area.
11. AESTHETICS: is the project on a prominent topographic feature? will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The project area is located on and within common topographic features typical of the area. The area is not visible from either a populated or scenic area. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] No limited resources in the area will be used. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of other private, state or federal current actions within the analysis area, or from future proposed state actions that are under MEPA review (scoping) or permitting review by any state agency within the analysis area?	[Y] No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N]
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project created, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number. Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on employment.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on tax revenues.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] There will be no measurable cumulative impacts related to demand for government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] In March 2003, DNRC adopted new Forest Management Rules. The full intent of the Rules has been incorporated into the design of the proposed action.
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? is there recreational potential within the tract? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] No wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N]
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES: is there a potential for other future use for easement area other than for timber management? Is future use hypothetical? What is the estimated return to the trust? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] Tract will continue to be utilized for grazing. The estimated return to the trust is approximately \$4,000.00 based on the price the purchaser is willing to pay and estimated harvest volume. No cumulative impacts are likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

EA Checklist Prepared by: Ron Buck, Area Forester, Northeastern Land Office August 11, 2010

IV. FINDINGS

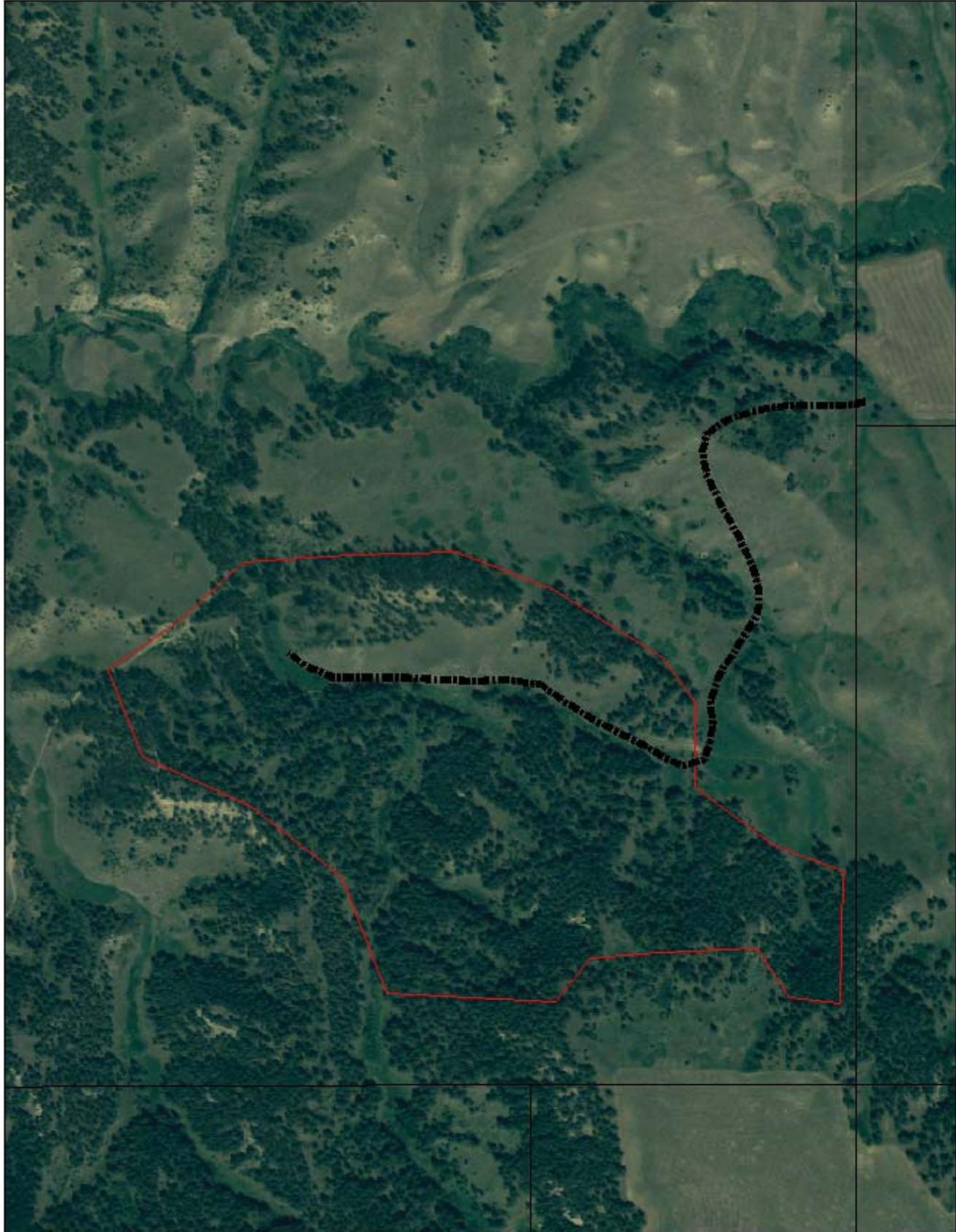
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	There will be no significant impacts from the action alternative.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:	
<input type="checkbox"/> EIS	<input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved by: Clive Rooney, Area Manager, Northeastern Land Office

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ALKALI COULEE TIMBER PERMIT



0.1 0.05 0 0.1 Miles

SW4, s.36, T18N, R16E