

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Cue_Evans Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date:	October 2010
Proponent:	James Evans
Location:	NE4SE4 Section 14-T1N-R12W
County:	Beaverhead
Land Owner:	Linda Cue
HRA#:	01-B-40503

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The type of action the Proponent is requesting is a SMZ Alternative Practice to Rule 4: (36.11.304), *Equipment Operation in the SMZ* and Rule 9: (36.11.309), *Depositing Slash in the SMZ*. Proponent proposes to operate a feller/buncher and skidder within the outer 25 feet of the SMZ. The feller/buncher would carry harvested trees into SMZ and stack into piles. Skidder would grapple piles and forward to landing area. Approximately 120 feet of SMZ along an intermittent, Class 2 stream would be involved. All activities would occur during dry or frozen, snow covered conditions.

The purpose of the action would be to allow the salvage of ~ one truck load of dead, dying and at-risk lodgepole pine affected by Mountain Pine Beetle while protecting existing regeneration and sapling trees, improve forest health and recover timber values before they are lost.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

A field review was conducted on September 27, 2010 by proponent J. Evans and DNRC forester C. Barone.

Other contacts:

Montana Natural Heritage Program/NRIS

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The Montana DEQ and Beaverhead County Conservation District have jurisdiction within the stream prism. The Proponent would be responsible for contacting appropriate agencies to obtain necessary permits.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: Not approve the Alternative Practice.

Action Alternative: Implementation of Alternative Practice as proposed with additional mitigation measures.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The proposed harvest activities would occur during conditions and implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) and any recommended mitigations measures. Impacts to soils are expected to be minor and temporary.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Is it possible that implementing this Alternative Practice would impact the integrity of the SMZ and these specific functions?

1. Ability to act as an effective sediment filter.
2. Ability to provide shade to regulate stream temperature.
3. Protection of stream channel and banks.
4. Ability to provide large, woody debris for eventual recruitment into the stream to maintain riffles pools and other elements of channel structure.
5. Promotes floodplain stability.

1. Harvest operations would take place during dry or frozen, snow covered conditions to prevent soil rutting. If soil displacement should happen, disturbed areas would be grass seeded immediately after harvest to reestablish vegetation. Dead and dying lodgepole pine is the target species. All other species, non-merchantable trees, sub-merchantable trees and shrubs would be protected and retained where available and practical. Slash from buncher piles would be left as a filter. Impacts to act as an effective sediment filter are not expected.
2. There are no trees or brush along the stream within the project area. Additional impacts to provide shade to regulate stream temperature are not expected.
3. All operations would occur during dry or frozen, snow covered conditions. No activity would occur within the inner 25 feet of the SMZ. Adverse impacts to stream channel and banks are not expected.
4. There are no trees or brush along the stream within the project area. Impacts to provide large, woody debris for eventual recruitment into the stream are not expected.
5. Stream is very small and intermittent and most likely would not flow more than six months during a drier year. Avoiding the inner 25 feet of the SMZ and grass seeding disturbed soil locations would provide adequate floodplain stability. Impacts to floodplain stability are not expected.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed project includes burning of logging slash piles. Localized short duration particulate emissions occur during slash burning. Slash burning is normally conducted in late October through November. The DEQ and the Cooperative Airshed groups regulate particulate emissions during this period. Burning times are coordinated to 1) limit burning periods of acceptable smoke dispersion and 2) to limit the cumulative generation of particulates.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The stream is very small and intermittent and most likely would not flow more than six months during a drier year. Vegetation within SMZ is open grassland and forbs with slopes <10%.

No rare plants or cover types are present within the proposed project area.

Due to the nature of the stream, size of the proposed project and additional mitigation measures, the implementation of this alternative practice should not dramatically impact any vegetative communities within the SMZ.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Would implementing this Alternative Practice impact the ability of the SMZ to support diverse and productive aquatic and terrestrial habitats?

No impacts are expected to aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The proposed project is located approximately one-half of a mile from the Big Hole River on an unnamed intermittent stream which does not contribute.

The proposed project area is located in potential Gray Wolf, Wolverine and Canada Lynx habitats. Occasional or transient use within the project area could occur.

No plant species of concern have been identified within the proposed project area.

Due to the size and location of the proposed project, no adverse impacts to the fisheries, threatened or endangered species or other species of concern within this watershed are expected from the proposed action.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

None are known to occur within the proposed project area.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Adverse impacts to aesthetics are not expected.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

None.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

None.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

None.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

None.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

None.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

None.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

None.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

None.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

None.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

None.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

None.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Chuck Barone	Date: October 4, 2010
	Title: Dillon Unit Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative: Implementation of Alternative Practice as proposed with additional mitigation measures.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

MEASURES RECOMMENDED TO MITIGATE POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

- 1) All operations/activities would occur during dry or frozen, snow covered conditions.
- 2) Removal of dead, dying and at-risk lodgepole pine affected by Mountain Pine Beetle. All other tree species, sub-merchantable trees, non-merchantable trees and shrubs would be protected and retained where available and practical.
- 3) Only a feller/buncher and a skidder would be allowed to operate within the SMZ.
- 4) Slash from buncher piles would be left for filter and disturbed soils within the SMZ would be grass seeded with an appropriate seed mixture.
- 5) Landing areas and slash piles would be located outside of the SMZ.
- 6) Adherence to mitigation measures stated in the Alternative Practice. Compliance with all other Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP's) and Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) laws.
- 7) If damage occurs to stream channels, banks or ground within the SMZ, all activities would cease until a DNRC Forest Practices representative is notified and can assess the situation.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

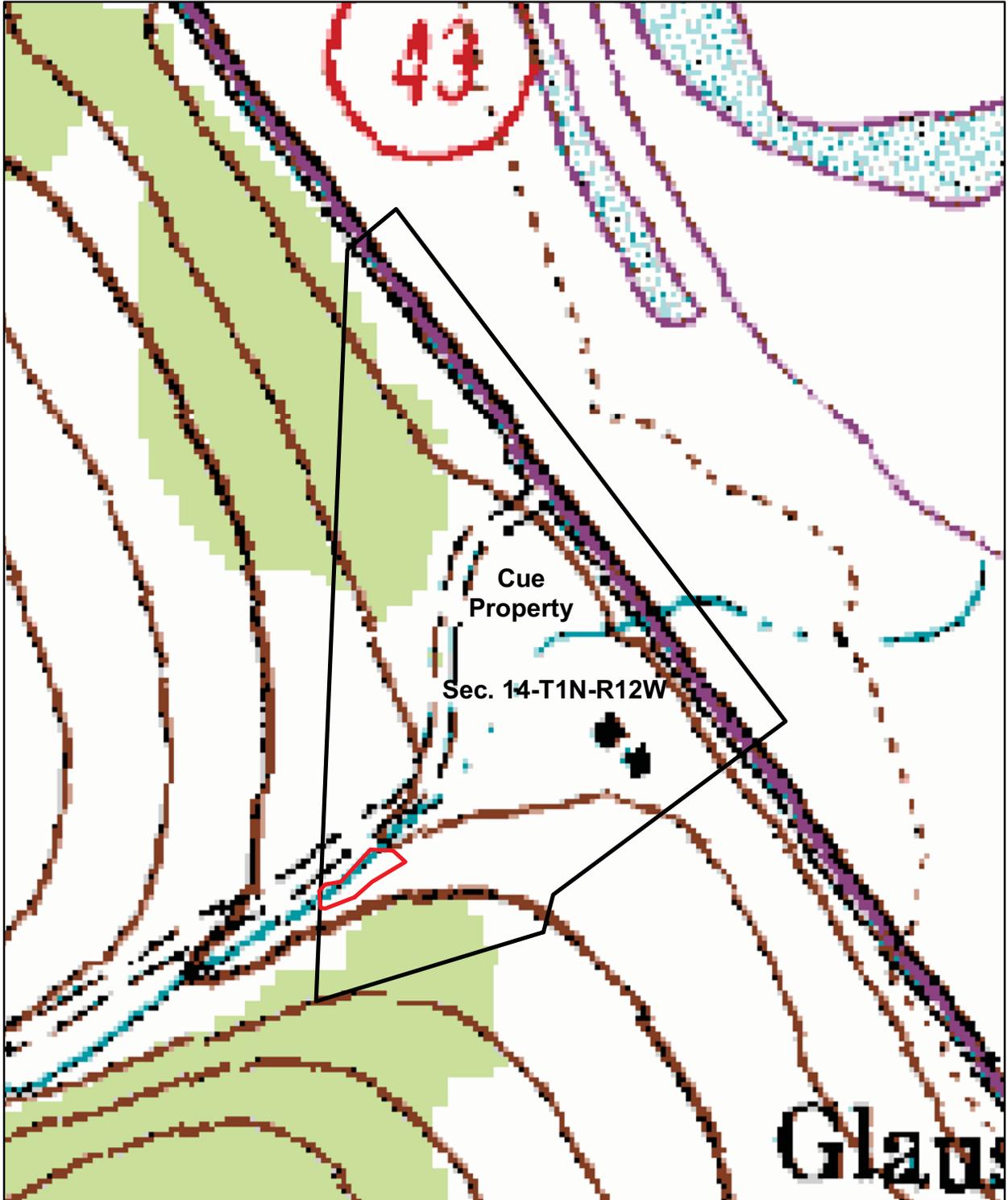
EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Tim Egan
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Signature: /S/ Timothy Egan	Date: 10/4/2010

ATTACHMENTS

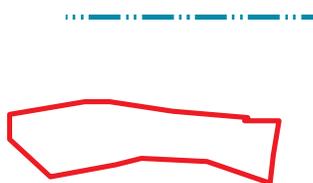
Alternative Practice Request
Site Map – Attachment A

ATTACHMENT A
Cue_Evans Alternative Practice Request
Sec. 14-T1N-R12W, Beaverhead County



0 70 140 280 420 560
Feet

1" = 3000 feet



Stream

Alternative
Practice
Area

