

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	PCTC- Buffalo Bill Road AP-45-01-12
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	09/01/2012
<b>Proponent:</b>	Plum Creek Timber Company- Kent Bevington
<b>Location:</b>	SWNW Section 19, Township 21N, Range 26W
<b>County:</b>	Sanders

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The type of action requested is an Alternative Practice to the Streamside Management Zone Law (77-5-301(1)MCA). The purpose is to construct road within the SMZ. The SMZ is 50ft wide in this portion of the drainage. The proposed road construction is between the existing haul road and the 50 ft boundary of the SMZ. The proposed road is outside any of the riparian area of the SMZ and is between two existing roads. The purpose of the new piece of road is to create a turn-a-round for log trucks coming out of a side drainage of Buffalo Bill Creek.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Posted at the Plains Unit Office (08-20-12 to 09-29-12).

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

None. PCTC has obtained 310 Permit from the Eastern Sanders County Conservation District for the bridge installation downstream from this proposed project.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Action 1:** Construct a "J" hole type turn-a-round for loaded trucks to do a 3 point turn loaded.

**Action 2:** Construct a short piece of road off the switchback that drops trucks back down on the main haul road headed down the drainage.

**No Action:** No activity would be undertaken on this portion of the road.

### 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.*

Soils are rocky silt loam deposits from Glacial Lake Missoula flood events 10-20,000 years ago. After review of existing trails, the soils are stable and BMP's have been effective in minimizing soil movement.

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**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.*

Proposed actions, if initiated, would not create significant impact(s) to the water quality of Buffalo Bill Creek.

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**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.*

All of the proposed actions, with the exception of the "no action" alternative, would involve minor increase in the amount of slash burning involved with this road project. No significant additional impacts would occur.

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**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.*

Action 1, Excavation and construction of a "J" hole truck turn-a-round would create additional exposed soil, but would have little if any disturbance to soil and vegetation within the SMZ. These newly exposed soils would have BMP's applied in a timely manner to prevent or minimize impacts to the riparian area.  
Action 2 Excavation and construction of this new piece of road, would create additional exposed soil in the SMZ. These newly exposed soils would have BMP's applied in a timely manner to prevent or minimize impacts to the stream and riparian vegetation (see maps and photos).

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**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.*

Proposed actions would have minimal effects to the fauna and habitats of the overall drainage.

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**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.*

Alternative actions 1 and 2 would have minimal effects to the T&E species within the drainage.

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

None present.

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**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.*

The potential impacts are similar for Alternative Actions 1 and 2, as they involve varying degrees of earth work. The earthwork on each of these Alternative Actions would leave exposed soil for a period of time that may be visible from low flying aircraft. This area sits at the bottom of the slope in the creek bottom, with not too many vantage points looking down into the area. The road and switchback already exist, either action will create minimal change to the aesthetics.

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**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.*

Action 1, excavate a “J” hole type turn-a-round, would have minimal impact or disturbance to soil and vegetation within the SMZ. These newly exposed soils would have BMP’s applied in a timely manner to prevent or minimize impacts to the stream and riparian vegetation.

Action 2, construction of a short piece of road off the existing switchback, would create additional exposed soil. The soil and vegetation disturbance would be confined to the outer 10-20 feet of the SMZ and between the existing road and the boundary of the SMZ. These newly exposed soils would have BMP’s applied in a timely manner to prevent or minimize impacts to the riparian vegetation.

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**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.*

There are no other environmental documents prepared on this specific tract that I am aware of. There has been environmental work done for the overall drainage by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation on two completed timber sales. The Environmental Assessments for the West Lynch Timber Sale was done in 2002 and the Shiloh Road Timber Sale was done in 2009. These can be found on the State website <http://dnrc.mt.gov/EnvironmentalDocuments/>.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</li><li>• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</li><li>• Enter “NONE” if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</li></ul>
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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

No risks are identified as a result of implementing any of the alternatives.

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**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

Selection of an action or no action alternative would not significantly alter these activities.

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**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.*

People are currently employed in the wood products industry in this region. Due to the relatively small size of this project, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on employment regardless of the alternative selected.

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**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.*

People are currently paying taxes from the woods products industry in this region. Due to the relatively small size of this project, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on tax revenues regardless of the alternative selected.

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**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*

Log trucks hauling to the mill would not result in a significant increase in traffic on County or State roadways. The log truck traffic is a normal contributor to the activities of the local community and industrial base and cannot be considered a new or increased source.

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**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.*

There are no Plans that would be impacted by this proposed activity.

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**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.*

Use is expected to remain the same following the project. Recreational areas and wilderness are not accessed through this tract. This area is a closed road system, approximately 2 miles behind a locked gate. Selection of any of the proposed alternatives would not alter these conditions.

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**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.*

Selection of any of the proposed alternatives would not alter these conditions.

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

Selection of any of the proposed alternatives would not alter these conditions.

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

Selection of any of the proposed alternatives would not alter these conditions.

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**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.*

Selection of any of the proposed alternatives would not alter these conditions.

<b>EA C</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>N</b> <input type="checkbox"/> : Everett J Young	<b>D</b> <input type="checkbox"/> : 08/08/2012
<b>P</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>T</b> <input type="checkbox"/> : Service Forester	

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**V. FINDING**

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**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Action Alternative 2 is selected for implementation

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**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

No significant impacts have been identified in association with Action Alternative 2. Mitigation measures as described will minimize lesser impacts.

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**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA C</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>N</b> <input type="checkbox"/> :
<b>A</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>L</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>B</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>T</b> <input type="checkbox"/> :
	<b>P</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>U</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>M</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>S</b> <input type="checkbox"/> : Done 09-11-12	<b>D</b> <input type="checkbox"/> :

DS-264  
Rev. 3/00

DNRC Plains Unit  
POB 219  
Plains, MT 59859

Date: September 11, 2012

Ref. HRA# Master Hazard  
AP-45-01-12

Plum Creek Timber Co.  
**Kent Bevington**  
140 N Russell St  
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Kent,

This letter is in reference to your request to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation for an Alternative Practice to the Streamside Management Zone Law in the SWNW of Section 19 T21N, R26W in the Buffalo Bill Creek drainage (refer to map #1). After review of the Checklist Environmental Assessment prepared for this request, the Alternative Practice to allow road construction within the SMZ is approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. The alternative practice is approved for a period of two years from the date of issuance, for one harvest entry during this time period (only for the location shown on the attached map).
2. Equipment Operations within the SMZ are restricted to the project area.
3. Rehab with appropriate BMP's, water bars and slash mats, grass seed if necessary.

4. Notify the Service Forester at this office 3 days before the operation takes place to give the option of being on site for the Alternative Practice.

**Conditions #4 must be completed prior to the start of logging and hauling operations for this Alternative Practice.**

**Approved alternative practices, including any additional conditions required by DNRC, shall have the same force and authority as the standards contained in 77-5-303, MCA, and shall be enforceable by DNRC under 77-5-305, MCA, to the same extent as such standards.**

It is your responsibility to ensure that your operator(s) understand that an alternative practice has been issued for their operations in this area, and that these conditions must be fully met to achieve compliance with the SMZ Law.

**This approval is contingent upon your execution and return of the attached statement to the DNRC, Plains Unit Office. No actions related to this alternative practice are to be taken until the signed statement is returned to DNRC.**

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Everett J Young  
Service Forester  
DNRC, Plains Unit  
406-826-4721

cc: HRA File, Applicant  
Unit Office, Land Office  
Service Forestry Bureau

DS-264 Pg. 3

ALTERNATIVE PRACTICE RESPONSIBILITY AFFIDAVIT

HRA# PCTC Master Hazard  
AP-45-01-12  
Buffalo Bill Road Project

In consideration of DNRC's approval of the alternative practice in SWNW Section 19 T21N, R26W, I hereby certify that I, or by written contract the legal entity I represent, am responsible for compliance with the Montana Streamside Management Zone Law. I understand that failure to implement any of the mitigation measures required by DNRC will be considered a violation of the SMZ Law (77-5-301 et. seq.), and may result in penalties assessed against me or the legal entity I represent.

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Signature of Responsible Party

Date

### APPLICATION FOR SMZ ALTERNATIVE PRACTICE

Alternative Practice ID Number \_\_\_\_\_ Application Date: 7-23-2012

(AP-Unit-Number-Year)

**Landowner:** PlumCreek  
**Address:** 140 North Russell Street Phone Number 406-207-1228  
**Contractor:** Joe Bache  
**Address:** PO Box 515 Plains 59859 Phone Number 406-531-0036

Person Legally Responsible for Compliance With SMZ Law: Kent Bevington  
Hazard Reduction Agreement (HRA) Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Site-Specific Alternative Practice Requested: Construct road in SMZ. Would like to construct a turn a round location for log trucks.

Other Alternatives Considered and Justification for proposed Alternative Practice:  
Considered reconstructing bridge location below this project but it would require extensive work next to creek.

Planned Mitigation Measures:  
Will put pit run on areas where road drainage is threatening on entering creek and will also berm it so there is no surface drainage going into creek. Will also reveg any raw dirt with grass seed.

Starting Date: Late Summer 2012 Completion Date: Early Fall 2012

Legal Description: Sec 19 T. 21 N. R. 26 W. Section \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ County Sanders

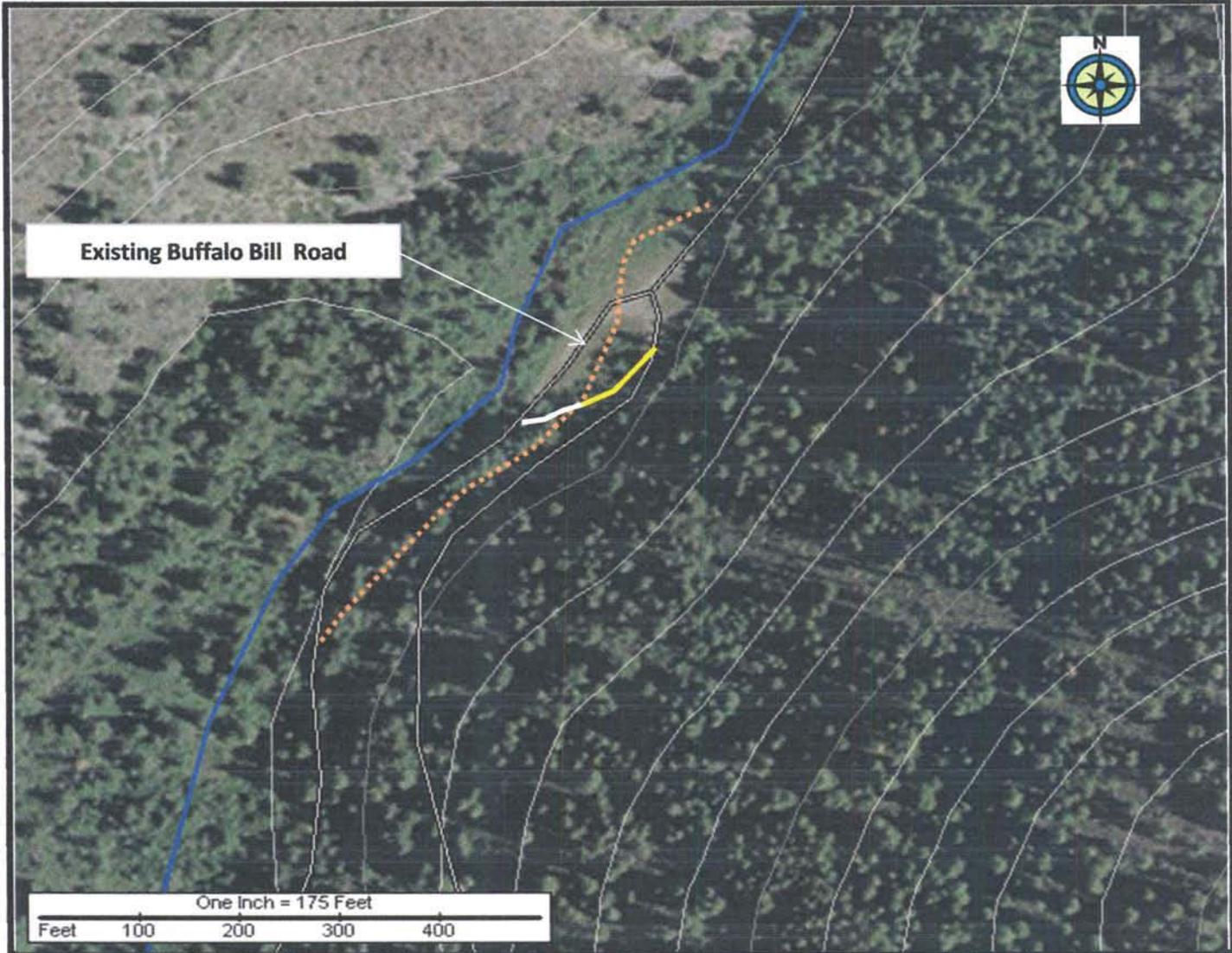
Lineal Extent Along Stream: ~50' SMZ Width: 50'

Stream Class (circle one): One Two Three  
Wetlands Present  Yes  No

Include a topographic map showing the logging unit boundaries, alternative practice site, streams, wetlands, and existing and/or proposed roads. Also include a plan-view map of the alternative practice site, including location and distance to stream, SMZ boundary, location of mitigation measures, and extent of activity requiring an alternative practice.

**Approved alternative practices, including any additional conditions approved by DNRC, shall have the same force and authority as the standards contained in 77-5-303, MCA, and shall be enforceable by DNRC under 77-5-305, MCA, to the same extent as such standards.**

cc: Applicant, Unit Office, Land Office, Service Forestry Bureau. Land Office



-  Buffalo Bill Creek
-  Approximate location of 50' SMZ
-  Proposed road location within the SMZ
-  Proposed outside of SMZ

The purpose of this Alternative Practice request is to build a loaded log truck turn-a-round because we are planning to install a less impactful bridge crossing just below this site. Therefore, this bridge install has the trucks coming up stream, thus the need to turn them around effectively.

**H** Helispot Location in  
Decimal Degrees

Lon -  
Lat +

Prepared By: klb  
Date: 7-23-2012

Map Type: Alt Prac  
Map Scale: 1/175

