

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION FOR
DNRC FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY**

Project Name: Last of the Mohicans

Proposed Implementation Date: September 2012

Proponent: DNRC and Tricon Timber

Type and Purpose of Action: Salvage harvest of MPB killed timber

Location: 36, T13N, R3W

County: Lewis & Clark

Category (refer to ARM 36.11.447 (3)(a) through (w) for additional detail):

- a) Temporary Uses of Land with Negligible Effects
- b) Plans and Policies
- c) Leases and Licenses
- d) Acquisition of Land or Interest in Land
- e) Road Maintenance and Repair
- f) Bridges and Culverts
- g) Crossing Class 3 Streams
- h) Temporary Road Use Permits
- i) Road Closure
- j) Material Stockpiles
- k) Backfilling
- l) Gathering Forest Products for Personal Use
- m) Regeneration
- n) Nursery Operations
- o) Water Wells
- p) Herbicides and Pesticides
- q) Other Hazardous Materials
- r) Fences
- s) Waterlines
- t) Removal of Small Trees
- u) Removal of Hazardous Trees
- v) Cone Collection
- w) Timber Harvest (<100 MBF green or 500 MBF salvage)

By process of the adoption of the Forest Management Rules on February 27, 2003, pursuant to ARM 36.2.523(5)(a), the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Trust Land Management Division, has adopted the above categorical exclusions for activities conducted on state forested trust lands. "Categorical Exclusion" refers to a type of action that does not individually, collectively, or cumulatively require an EA or EIS unless extraordinary circumstances occur (ARM 36.2.522(5)).

Extraordinary Circumstances:

Will the proposed action affect one or more of the following resources, species or situations in the project area? If the resource, species, or situation is present, but project design avoids potential adverse effects on the resource, the answer is "No". One "Yes" answer indicates that Categorical Exclusion is not appropriate for the project, and an EA or EIS must be conducted.

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | a) Sites with high erosion risk. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | b) Federally listed threatened and endangered species or critical habitat for threatened and endangered species as designated by the USFWS. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | c) Municipal watersheds. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | d) The SMZ of fish bearing streams or lakes, except for modification or replacement of bridges, culverts and other crossing structures. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | e) State natural area. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | f) Native American religious and cultural sites. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | g) Archaeological sites. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | h) Historic properties and areas. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | i) Several related projects that individually may be subject to categorical exclusion but that may occur at the same time or in the same geographic area. Such related actions may be subject to environmental review even if they are not individually subject to review. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | j) Violations of any applicable state or federal laws or regulations. |

The project listed above meets the definition of the indicated categorical exclusion, including specified conditions and extraordinary circumstances, as provided in the Forest Management Rules (ARM 36.11.447).

Prepared by: D.J. Bakken, Helena Unit Manager
(Name)

9/17/2012
(Date)

Decision by: Gavin Anderson
(Name)

Forest & Lands Program Manager
(Title)


(Signature)

9/17/12
(Date)

Last of the Mohicans



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles



Last of the Mohicans
36, T13N, R3W
Salvage Timber permit proposal

Tricon Timber and DNRC propose to salvage MPB killed timber from operable slopes along the existing road in this section. Cathy Campbell is planning similar operations and has provided temporary access for log hauling across her access road.

DNRC conducted a timber permit on this parcel in 1990 – '95. Potential issues examined at that time, and found to be not significant were as follows.

1. Wildlife use – This parcel is part of the Gates of the Mountains Game Preserve. The only stipulations in the area are no hunting and no fire arm discharge. Since policy and contract terms already prohibit contractors from possessing a firearm while working on state projects, this is not an issue. Terrain limitations would result in a high percentage of inoperable areas, where trees and dead snags would remain, to provide cover and snag habitats on the parcel.
2. Recreational use – there is heavy recreational use along the river/canyon, however, the harvest areas are not visible from there. The proposed harvest is on the bench lands along the existing road, above where the steep cliffs drop to the river.
3. There is a power line over the access road, which has low clearance. As before, trucks may need to travel off the road, closer to the power pole, to be sure to miss the line. No construction is needed for this, since the terrain is flat in this area.
4. The Gates of the Mountains Wilderness is across the river from the state parcel. Slash burning operations should target days of good to excellent ventilation, to avoid smoke production which may impact the area.

The gross operable (<45% and not excessively rocky) area is about 125 acres. Within this is a mix of sawlog size and pole (pulp) size timber. Most of the stands were Ponderosa Pine, which is now mostly (probably >90%) dead from MPB. Some scattered Douglas-fir are also present. There has been enough elapsed time since the MPB infestation that decay is rendering many trees unmerchantable, since they break apart during harvest and do not remain intact enough to place on a truck. This is most common in the smaller pole sizes but is also beginning to have effect in the larger sawlog size trees. This may be the last viable MPB salvage of Ponderosa Pine in the immediate Helena area, thus earning the permit name, "Last of the Mohicans". There is no viable pulp outlet at this time. Tricon proposes to salvage Ponderosa Pine and deliver to their rail siding in Helena. In the process, there are some patches of Pine that are still alive and the proposal includes thinning these to create stand conditions which favors continued survival of the retained Pine. Ocular estimate is that there may be 100 MBF equivalent in green and 100 MBF equivalent in salvable dead. (There is much more dead than this, but as noted above, some will be too far decayed to be harvested.)

A Categorical Exclusion form has been completed for this project.

Project duration would be a few weeks in the fall of 2012, using mechanized ground based harvesting equipment.

D.J. Bakken
Helena Unit Manager
9/17/2012

Last of the Mohicans

