

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Lion Creek Alternative Practice Reed-Daenzer
Proposed Implementation Date:	December 1, 2012
Proponent:	Jim Daenzer - Contractor
Location:	S2NW4 - Section 8, T22N, R17W
County:	Lake

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Jim Daenzer has requested a Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) Alternative Practice for approximately 300 feet of Lion Creek on the north side near the Reed homestead. The request to harvest all the lodgepole pine trees, that are susceptible to Mountain Pine Beetle, will leave less than 10 trees per 100 lineal feet of stream for 300 total feet. According to the SMZ Law the Retention Tree Requirement (*Rule 5: [36.11.305]*) will not be met and a request for an Alternative Practice has been received by the Swan Unit (*MT DNRC*). This is to analyze the potential effects to determine if no significant impact will occur from the proposed Alternative Practice. To maintain stream shading, the mitigation will be the retention of all the trees on the south side of Lion Creek. All sub-merchantable trees are also retained, and regeneration is protected (see *Attachment A - Map of Proposed Project*).

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

Scoping involved contacting the neighbor (Mitch Sondreson) who lives on the south side of Lion Creek via phone (11/2/12). Jim Daenzer also contacted Mitch to negotiate a temporary easement to access the Reeds property, which is also on the south side of Lion Creek.

Emails describing the project with the project map were sent to the following for comments on 11/20/12:

- (1) Leo Rosenthal - DFWP Fisheries Biologist ;
- (2) Anne Dahl - Swan Ecosystem Center (SEC) Director; and
- (3) Roger Marshall - SEC Forester.

An on-site review with Leo Rosenthal was held on 11/19/12 and no concerns were raised. A second on-site review was held on 11/27/12 with SEC forester, Roger Marshall, he did not have any concerns and SEC is funding the fuel mitigation project around the home.

I reviewed the site with Jim Daenzer on 11/2/12 and found the following:

- 1) The proposal is for a short 300-foot segment.
- 2) The area of the proposal has a natural high bank that protects the upland area from the stream bank.
- 3) There are numerous trees on the south side of Lion Creek that are not accessible due to multiple channels and all the trees on the south side, which create the shade for the stream, will be left.

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

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

Lake County Conservation District if within 10 feet of Lion Creek.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

No-Action Alternative - Meet all SMZ rules in the proposed harvest.

Action Alternative - To harvest all of the merchantable lodgepole pine in a 300-foot length of the north side of Lion Creek. The resulting practice will leave less than 10 trees per 100 lineal feet, but other tree species will be left. All the trees on the south side of Lion Creek in this 300-foot area will be left to provide shade and large woody debris recruitment. All sub-merchantable trees will be retained. All other SMZ requirements will be met (no equipment operations will be allowed).

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

No Impacts should occur. All operations will be performed on frozen and /or snow covered soil.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

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

Ability to act as an effective sediment filter.

Ability to provide shade to regulate stream temperature.

Protection of stream channel and banks.

Ability to provide large woody debris for eventual recruitment into the stream to maintain riffles, pools and other elements of channel stability.

Promotes floodplain stability.

Lion Creek is an important fish-bearing stream especially for Bull Trout.

No cumulative or immediate impacts are expected from the implementation of this Alternative Practice.

- 1) The stream will remain an effective sediment filter.
- 2) The ability to provide shade is maintained by leaving all the trees on the south side of the stream.
- 3) Full protection of the stream channel and banks is maintained by keeping equipment out and any trees falling within the SMZ will be retained.
- 4) Ability to provide large woody debris is maintained from current and future blowdown along the stream; both up and down stream. The small 300-foot area has steep high banks and very few trees.
- 5) Promotes flood plain stability; no area is in the flood plain.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

No impacts are expected.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

No impacts are expected to occur. The vegetation in this area is already regenerating and new lodgepole pine trees are growing to replace the trees that are proposed to be cut.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and 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?

The small limited area will not impact any of the fish, wildlife, or birds that frequent the area.

An on-site field visit was held with Leo Rosenthal, DFWP Fisheries Biologist, on 11/19/12. Leo stated that he concurred that this small area on the north side will not have any significant impact on the fisheries or aquatic life. No further review is required by the Fisheries Biologist.

The ability to support diverse and productive aquatic and terrestrial riparian habitats is maintained by limiting the area of the alternative practice.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Lion Creek is an important Bull Trout stream and actively managed by MT DFWP and federal agencies. The Fisheries Biologist has no concerns over this project. The grizzly bear also has habitat in this area that is not impacted by this project.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

No identified sites are known at this time.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No visible impacts are 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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands for resources are expected.

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 known environmental documents relating to this proposed project.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>
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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 direct, indirect, and 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 direct, indirect, and 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 direct, indirect, and 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 direct, indirect, and 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 direct, indirect, and 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 direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

None

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Allen Branine	Date: Nov. 26, 2012
	Title: Swan Unit Fire Supervisor	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have reviewed the response from the public and information presented in the CEA. I have selected the Action Alternative without additional modifications. I feel the analysis of identified issues did not reveal information to persuade me to select the No-Action Alternative.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have determined that there will be no significant impacts for the proposed action to proceed as long as the following measures are followed.

- 1) No equipment will be allowed in the SMZ.
- 2) All operations will take place during the winter with frozen and/or snow covered soils.
- 3) No trees may be harvested in the 50-foot SMZ on the south side of the stream for a minimum of 5 years.
- 4) All sub-merchantable and regenerating trees shall be protected.

Given this environmental assessment, I believe that this project will not cause any detrimental effect to the project area or surrounding properties or resources. This project is also consistent with the requirements of the *Montana State Statute 77-5-207*.

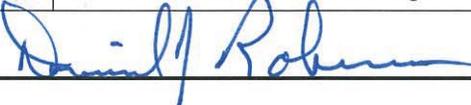
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Based on the following, I find that a more detailed EA or an EIS does not need to be prepared:

- The CEA adequately addressed the issues identified during project development and displayed the information needed to make decision.
- Evaluation of the potential impacts of the proposed Lion Creek Alternative Practice Reed-Daenzer Project indicates that no significant impacts would occur.

The Project Leader provided adequate opportunities for public review and comment. Concerns were incorporated into the project design to mitigate impacts.

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Dan Roberson
	Title: Swan Unit Manager
Signature: 	Date: 11/29/12



