

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Land Use license 3053452 – temporary use of state road at Island Lake
Proposed Implementation Date:	February 2013
Proponent:	Plum Creek Timber Co. LLP
Location:	T29N R27W section 36
County:	Lincoln
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Plum Creek Marketing, Inc. submitted a Land Use License (LUL) application for the use of 0.88 miles of existing state road to haul approximately 500MBF of logs from Plum Creek property in section 25 through State section 36 to County road. This EA will analyze and disclose impacts resulting from granting a LUL to Plum 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. 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.

No public scoping was performed by DNRC for this proposed project.

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.

None needed

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: Do not grant land use license. Proponent's property remains unaccessed, log hauling cannot occur.
Action: DNRC would authorize the proposed use and implement a land use license as described in Section 1.

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.

Log hauling for the duration proposed would have negligible impacts on the established road. Land Use License requirements would protect resources. Road use would be limited to suitable conditions to avoid road rutting. There is a low risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to soils with this use.

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.

No change in existing road conditions and direct or indirect impacts to downstream water quality or beneficial use are expected to result from the proposed log hauling on the existing road.

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 significant impacts to air quality are anticipated from implementing the proposed action.

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.

Vegetation cover would not be impacted from the proposed action.

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.

The proposed road use would occur within elk winter range (DFWP 2008). Mule or white-tailed deer winter range is not present within the project area. The proposed road use would not affect snow intercept or thermal cover. Disturbance associated with road use would be localized to 0.9 miles of DNRC road and occur for a relatively short time period. The proposed road use is within 0.3 miles of year-round open roads. Motorized access to the project area would remain restricted to authorized personnel during and after activities. Thus, negligible adverse direct, indirect or cumulative effects to big game are anticipated.

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.

STATUS	SPECIES/HABITAT	DETERMINATION – BASIS
Threatened and Endangered Species	Canada lynx (<i>Felis lynx</i>) Habitat: Subalpine fir habitat types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zones	No suitable Canada lynx habitat types occur within the project area. Thus, no adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Canada lynx would be anticipated.

	<p>Grizzly bear (<i>Ursus arctos</i>) Habitat: Recovery areas, security from human activity</p>	<p>The project area is located within grizzly bear non-recovery occupied habitat associated with the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone (USFWS 1997, Wittinger 2002). Use of the project area by grizzly bears is possible, although unlikely due to very low grizzly bear densities in this region. Grizzly bear programmatic commitments contained within DNRC's HCP (2010) would be applied and reduce potential impacts to bears. No new roads would be built under the proposed action and restricted roads used during activities would remain closed to general public use. Visual screening would not be appreciably affected. Potential disturbance to grizzly bears would be minimized by concentrating road use outside of the spring period (April 1- June 15). Given the minor distance of roads used and project area's minor expected level of disturbance associated with the proposed short-term activities, negligible direct, indirect or cumulative effects to grizzly bears would be anticipated.</p>
Sensitive Species	<p>Bald eagles (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional forest less than 1 mile from open water</p>	<p>The proposed project area is outside of any known bald eagle nest site or primary use areas. Thus, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to bald eagles would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Black-backed woodpeckers (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>) Habitat: Mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest</p>	<p>No recently (<5 years) burned areas occur within the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to black-backed woodpeckers would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Coeur d'Alene salamanders (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>) Habitat: Waterfall spray zones, talus near cascading streams</p>	<p>No moist talus or streamside talus habitat occurs within the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Coeur d'Alene salamanders would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (<i>Tympanuchus Phasianellus columbianus</i>) Habitat: Grassland, shrubland, riparian, agriculture</p>	<p>No suitable grassland communities occur within the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Columbian sharp-tailed grouse would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Common loons (<i>Gavia immer</i>) Habitat: Cold mountain lakes, nest in emergent vegetation</p>	<p>No lakes suitable for nesting loons occur inside or within 500 feet of the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to common loons would be anticipated.</p>

	<p>Fishers (<i>Martes pennanti</i>) Habitat: Dense mature to old forest less than 6,000 feet in elevation and riparian</p>	<p>The proposed project area contains potentially suitable fisher habitat, however suitable riparian fisher habitat is not present within 500 feet of the road proposed for use. Adjacent privately owned industrial timberlands do not likely contain suitable fisher habitat (due to recent harvesting), further reducing the likelihood that fishers would be present within the project area. Because of these existing conditions, fisher use of the area is highly unlikely. Proposed road use would not appreciably reduce habitat suitability for fishers. The proposed road use would not increase access for trapping, as closures to the public would be maintained. Thus, negligible direct, indirect or cumulative effects to fishers would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Flammulated owls (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest</p>	<p>The proposed project area contains potentially suitable habitat for flammulated owls. The proposed road use would not alter flammulated owl habitat. Most road use would likely occur when flammulated owls are absent from the project area (having migrated out of the area for the winter). Should flammulated owls be present after June 16, activities could disturb or temporarily displace owls. However, disturbance associated with harvest activities would be localized and occur within a small portion of the project area. Thus, negligible direct, indirect or cumulative effects to flammulated owls would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Gray wolves (<i>Canis lupus</i>) Habitat: Ample big game populations, security from human activities</p>	<p>The project area could be potentially used by wolves. No den sites or rendezvous areas are known to occur within the project area. However, if documented in the vicinity of the project area, mechanized activities would be restricted within 1 mile of wolf dens (ARM 33.11.430(1)(a)) and 0.5 miles of wolf rendezvous sites (ARM 33.11.430(1)(b)). Proposed road use is not expected to appreciably affect big game populations. Thus, negligible direct, indirect or cumulative effects to gray wolves would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Harlequin ducks (<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>) Habitat: White-water streams, boulder and cobble substrates</p>	<p>No suitable high-gradient stream or river habitats are present within project area. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to harlequin ducks would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Northern bog lemmings (<i>Synaptomys borealis</i>) Habitat: Sphagnum meadows, bogs, fens with thick moss mats</p>	<p>No suitable sphagnum bogs or fens occur within the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to northern bog lemmings would be anticipated.</p>
	<p>Peregrine falcons (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) Habitat: Cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands</p>	<p>No cliffs potentially suitable for nesting by peregrine falcons are present within in the project area. No peregrine falcon observations have been recorded and no known peregrine falcon nests occur within 1 mile of the project area (MNHP). Road use would primarily occur outside of the peregrine falcon nesting season. Thus, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to peregrine falcons would be anticipated.</p>

	Pileated woodpeckers (<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest	The proposed project area contains potentially suitable habitat for pileated woodpeckers. Pileated woodpecker habitat would not be altered with the proposed activities. Snags and coarse woody debris would not be affected by the proposed road use, as motorized public access would remain restricted. Pileated woodpeckers are generally tolerant of human disturbance. Disturbance associated with harvest activities would be localized and primarily occur outside of the woodpecker nesting season. Thus, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to pileated woodpeckers would be anticipated.
	Townsend's big-eared bats (<i>Plecotus townsendii</i>) Habitat: Caves, caverns, old mines	No suitable caves or mine tunnels are known to occur within the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to Townsend's big-eared bats are anticipated.
Big Game Species	Elk (<i>Cervus canadensis</i>)	The entire 640-acre project area consists of elk winter range (DFWP 2008). Mule or white-tailed deer winter range is not present within the project area. The proposed road use would not affect snow intercept or thermal cover. Disturbance associated with road use would be localized to 0.9 miles of DNRC road and occur for a relatively short time period. Motorized access to the project area would remain restricted to authorized personnel during and after activities. Thus, negligible adverse direct, indirect or cumulative effects to big game are anticipated.
	Mule Deer (<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>)	
	White-tailed Deer (<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>)	

Given the limited number of road miles affected and relatively short duration of use, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to wildlife would be anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

The proposed action would utilize an existing road and no adverse effects are expected with the implementation of the proposed action.

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.

The proposed action would result in the continued use of an existing road.

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 significant impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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.

This parcel is covered by the USFWS Habitat Conservation Plan.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<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>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No impacts to human health and safety are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

Granting the LUL would positively impact Plum Creek's ability to produce forest products from the land tributary to the permitted road.

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.

Granting the LUL would allow a logging crew of 3-5 access to work on Plum Creek's property for several months. This would result in continued employment for that logging crew.

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.

The proposed action will have no significant impact on tax revenue.

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

The implementation of the proposed alternative is not expected to generate any additional demands on services provided by Lincoln County.

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.

Implementation of the proposed alternative would have no affect on zoning management plans.

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.

The subject trust land is utilized by recreationalists due to the ability to access it from the county road in the southeast corner. The proposed alternative will not adversely impact the ability to access the trust land and should have no impact on any hunting or recreational use that occurs on this tract.

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.

No impacts to density and distribution of population and housing would result from implementing the proposed action alternative.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposed action alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

Implementation of the proposed action alternative would not impact cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

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.

The Common Schools Trust would benefit by receiving a payment of approximately \$1550.00.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeremy Rank	Date: 1/30/2013
	Title: Management Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed action alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a LUL be granted to Plum Creek Marketing, Inc. for the temporary use of the existing state road.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant impacts to the trust land is minimal due to the nature of the proposed action which is to grant permission to use an existing forest access road for a limited duration of time.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Mark Peck
	Title: Libby Unit Manager
Signature: /s/ Mark Peck	Date: January 31, 2013