

Environmental Assessment Checklist

Project Name: Pistol Creek Limited Access
Proposed Implementation Date: July, 2015
Proponent: Kalispell Unit, Northwest Land Office, Montana DNRC
County: Lake

Type and Purpose of Action

Description of Proposed Action:

The Kalispell Unit of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is proposing the Pistol Creek Limited Access timber project. The project is located approximately 3 miles south of St. Ignatius, Montana (refer to Attachments vicinity map A-1 and project map A-2) and includes the following sections:

Beneficiary	Legal Description	Total Acres	Treated Acres
Common Schools	S. 36, T18N, R20W	480	334
Public Buildings			
MSU 2 nd Grant			
MSU Morrill			
Eastern College-MSU/Western College-U of M			
Montana Tech			
University of Montana			
School for the Deaf and Blind			
Pine Hills School			
Veterans Home			
Public Land Trust			
Acquired Land			

Objectives of the project include:

- To generate funds for the Common Schools Trust pursuant to Section 77-1-202 Montana Code Annotated [MCA].
- To generate revenue for the common school trust (C.S.) by salvaging insect infected timber before it loses economic value as directed in MCA 77-5-207.
- To improve the overall health and vigor of the residual trees by removing insect infested and diseased tree.

Proposed activities include:

Action	Quantity
Proposed Harvest Activities	# Acres
Clearcut	
Seed Tree	
Shelterwood	
Selection	
Commercial Thinning	334
Salvage	334
Total Treatment Acres	
Proposed Forest Improvement Treatment	# Acres
Pre-commercial Thinning	
Planting	
Proposed Road Activities	# Miles
New permanent road construction	0
New temporary road construction	0.2
Road maintenance	0.92
Road reconstruction	
Road abandoned	0.08
Road reclaimed	0.12
Other Activities	
Pile burning	334

Duration of Activities:	14 months
Implementation Period:	August 2015

The lands involved in this proposed project are held in trust by the State of Montana. (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889; 1972 Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the DNRC are required by law to administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for the beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA).

The DNRC would manage lands involved in this project in accordance with:

- The State Forest Land Management Plan (DNRC 1996),
- Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARM 36.11.401 through 471),
- The Montana DNRC Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) (DNRC 2010)
- and all other applicable state and federal laws.

Project Development

SCOPING:

- DATE:
- 05/21/2015
- PUBLIC SCOPED:
 - The scoping notice was posted on the DNRC Website:
<http://dnrc.mt.gov/PublicInterest/Notices/Default.asp>
 - Adjacent landowners
 - Statewide DNRC scoping list
 - Legal ad in local newspaper
 - Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
 - Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe
- COMMENTS RECEIVED:
 - How many: 3 comments
 - Concerns:
 - 1) Grazing Lessee was concerned about firewood being taken illegally, about fence damage, and weeds.
 - 2) FWP sent in a “No Comment”
 - 3) The Chippewa Cree Tribe sent a letter hoping to do an on the ground field trip, but due to timing and budget issues they had to cancel. They said due to the steep terrain likely there weren’t any cultural issues.
 - Results (how were concerns addressed):
 - Any potential fencing damage due to this project will be fixed as soon as feasible.
 - Any equipment used on this project will be cleaned and “weed free” inspected.
 - The road will be abandoned post project and that should deter collection of firewood.

DNRC specialists were consulted, including:

- Hydro/Soils= Marc Vessar
- Wildlife= Leah Breidinger

Internal and external issues and concerns were incorporated into project planning and design and will be implemented in associated contracts.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS

NEEDED: *(Conservation Easements, Army Corps of Engineers, road use permits, etc.)*

- **United States Fish & Wildlife Service-** DNRC is managing the habitats of threatened and endangered species on this project by implementing the Montana DNRC Forested Trust Lands HCP and the associated Incidental Take Permit that was issued by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) in February of 2012 under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act. The HCP identifies specific conservation strategies for managing the habitats of grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and three fish species: bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and Columbia redband trout. This project complies with the HCP. The HCP can be found at www.dnrc.mt.gov/HCP.

- **Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)-** DNRC is classified as a major open burner by DEQ and is issued a permit from DEQ to conduct burning activities on state lands managed by DNRC. As a major open-burning permit holder, DNRC agrees to comply with the limitations and conditions of the permit.
- **Montana/Idaho Airshed Group-** The DNRC is a member of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group which was formed to minimize or prevent smoke impacts while using fire to accomplish land management objectives and/or fuel hazard reduction (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2006). The Group determines the delineation of airsheds and impact zones throughout Idaho and Montana. Airsheds describe those geographical areas that have similar atmospheric conditions, while impact zones describe any area in Montana or Idaho that the Group deems smoke sensitive and/or having an existing air quality problem (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2006). As a member of the Airshed Group, DNRC agrees to burn only on days approved for good smoke dispersion as determined by the Smoke Management Unit.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No-Action Alternative: The insects and disease issues will continue to degrade the stand. If the dead and dying trees are not removed there is potential for substantial value loss.

Action Alternative: We will remove the dead and dying timber. We will also commercially thin the residual stand allowing the remaining trees to be more vigorous and resilient against insects and disease.

Impacts on the Physical Environment

Evaluation of the impacts on the No-Action and Action Alternatives including **direct, secondary, and cumulative** impacts on the Physical Environment.

VEGETATION:

Vegetation Existing Conditions: This stand has major insects and disease issues. Root disease has been in the stand for a long time resulting in large patches of dead and dying timber. The Douglas-fir bark beetle has started infecting the weakened root disease trees, and is now moving into the healthy stand.

Vegetation	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Noxious Weeds	x				x				x				yes	1
Rare Plants	x				x				x					
Vegetative community	x				x				x					
Old Growth	x				x				x					

Vegetation	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Action														
Noxious Weeds		x				x				x			yes	1
Rare Plants		x				x				x				
Vegetative community		x				x				x				
Old Growth	x				x				x					

Comments: 1. Grazing Lessee was concerned about firewood being taken illegally, about fence damage, and weeds.

Vegetation Mitigations: Equipment will be washed and “weed free” inspected.

SOIL DISTURBANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY:

Soil Disturbance and Productivity Existing Conditions: Inventoried soil types in the project area are 11,119,122, 113, 176, 53, 59, 60, and 61 as listed in the Soil Survey of Lake County Area, Montana (USDA, 1990). These soil types are not considered as highly erosive soil. Slopes in the harvest area are generally less than 35% although a few pitches up to 60% can be found. Past harvesting impacts are limited to skid trail from a salvage project during the winter and spring of 2015.

Soil Disturbance and Productivity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)	x				x					x				1
Erosion	x				x				x					
Nutrient Cycling	x				x				x					
Slope Stability	x				x				x					
Soil Productivity	x				x				x					
Action														
Physical Disturbance (Compaction and Displacement)		x								x			Y	2
Erosion		x								x			Y	2
Nutrient Cycling		x								x			Y	3
Slope Stability	x								x					
Soil Productivity	x								x					

Comments:

-
1. Impacts from past harvest are very limited and are estimated to cover less than 1 percent of the proposed harvest area.
 2. Some compaction/displacement/erosion would be expected due to the use of heavy equipment dragging trees, however adverse impacts would be minimized by following the recommended mitigation measures listed below.
 3. Some fine material which contains nutrients would be removed from the site. The actual impact would not likely be visually noticeable.

Soil Mitigations:

The analysis and level of effects to soils resources are based on implementation of the following mitigation measures.

- 1) Limit ground-based equipment operations to periods when soils are relatively dry, (less than 20 percent oven-dry weight on harvest units), frozen, or snow-covered to in order to minimize soil compaction and rutting, and maintain drainage features. Check soil moisture conditions prior to equipment start-up. In order to prevent soil resource impacts, logging activities would be restricted to periods when one or more of the following conditions occurs, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Forest Officer.
 - Soil-moisture content at 4-inch depth is less than 20% of oven-dry weight
 - Minimum frost depth of 3 inches
 - Minimum of 18 inches loose snow or 12 inches packed snow adequate to avoid soil displacement
- 2) On ground-based units, the logger and sale administrator would agree to a skidding plan prior to equipment operations. Skid trail planning would identify which main trails to use and how many additional trails are needed. Trails that do not comply with BMPs (i.e. trails in draw bottoms) would not be used unless impacts can be adequately mitigated. Regardless of use, these trails may be closed with additional drainage installed, where needed, or grass-seeded to stabilize the site and control erosion.
- 3) Tractor skidding should be limited to slopes of less than 40 percent unless the operation can be completed without causing excessive displacement or erosion. Based on site review, short, steep slopes may require a combination of mitigation measures, such as adverse skidding to a ridge or winchline, and skidding from more moderate slopes of less than 40 percent.
- 4) Keep skid trails/landings to 20 percent or less of the harvest unit acreage. This requires average skid trail spacing at least 60 feet. Provide for drainage on skid trails and roads concurrently with operations.
- 5) Slash disposal: Limit the combination of disturbance and scarification to 30 to 40 percent of the harvest units. No dozer piling on slopes over 35 percent; no excavator piling on slopes over 40 percent, unless the operation can be completed without causing excessive erosion. Consider lopping and scattering or jackpot burning on the steeper slopes. Consider disturbance incurred during skidding operations to at least partially provide scarification for regeneration.
- 6) Retain 5 to 10 tons per acre of large woody debris on Douglas-fir habitat types within the project area. Maintain a feasible majority of all fine litter following harvesting operations. On units where whole tree harvesting is used, implement one of the following mitigations for nutrient cycling: 1) use in-woods processing equipment that

leaves slash on site; 2) return skid-slash and evenly distribute within the harvest area; or 3) cut tops from every third bundle of logs so that tops are dispersed as skidding progresses.

- 7) Install and maintain, concurrent with hauling operations, adequate road drainage to control erosion and comply with forestry Best Management Practices. To maintain drainage features and avoid rutting, the Department would limit the season of road use to dry, frozen, or adequately snow covered conditions.

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY:

The proposed project would implement a moderate intensity management action on moderately erosive soils. No perennial, connected surface water features were identified in the proposed project boundary and all appropriate Forestry BMPs would be implemented. The Class 3 SMZ has been excluded from harvest. For these reasons, the risk of measurable, adverse cumulative effects to water resources would be low.

Water Quality and Quantity Existing Conditions: The only surface water found in the parcel is a short class 3 stream originates from a spring. Cattle grazing in the area of the spring and stream has resulted in trampled banks. Because this stream does not connect to other water bodies, no risk of cumulative impacts to downstream waterbodies from bank trampling were observed.

Water Quality & Quantity	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Water Quality	X				X				X					
Water Quantity	X				X				X					
Action														
Water Quality	X				X				X					
Water Quantity	X				X				X					

Comments: None

Water Quality & Quantity Mitigations:

- Follow all appropriate Forestry Best Management Practices
- Follow all mitigation measures listed in the Soil Analysis

FISHERIES:

Fisheries Existing Conditions:

No streams are present in the project area.

No-Action: No direct or indirect impacts would occur to affected fish species or affected fisheries resources beyond those described in Fisheries Existing Conditions. Cumulative effects

(other related past and present factors; other future, related actions; and any impacts described in Fisheries Existing Conditions) would continue to occur.

Action Alternative (see Fisheries table below):

Fisheries	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Sediment	X				X				X					
Flow Regimes	X				X				X					
Woody Debris	X				X				X					
Stream Shading	X				X				X					
Stream Temperature	X				X				X					
Connectivity	X				X				X					
Populations	X				X				X					
Action														
Sediment	X				X				X					
Flow Regimes	X				X				X					
Woody Debris	X				X				X					
Stream Shading	X				X				X					
Stream Temperature	X				X				X					
Connectivity	X				X				X					
Populations	X				X				X					

Comments: None

Fisheries Mitigations: None

WILDLIFE:

No-Action: No activities associated with the proposed timber harvest would occur. In the short-term, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to terrestrial wildlife species would be anticipated. In the long-term, and in the absence of continued insect outbreaks, wildlife species preferring closed canopy forests would benefit while wildlife species preferring open forest conditions would be adversely effected.

Action Alternative (see Wildlife table below):

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Threatened and Endangered Species														
Grizzly bear (<i>Ursus arctos</i>)		X				X				X			Y	WI-1

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Habitat: Recovery areas, security from human activity														
Canada lynx (<i>Felix lynx</i>) Habitat: Subalpine fir habitat types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone	X				X				X					
Wolverine (<i>Gulo gulo</i>)	X				X				X					
Sensitive Species														
Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional forest within 1 mile of open water		X				X				X			Y	WI-2
Black-backed woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>) Habitat: Mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest	X				X				X					
Coeur d'Alene salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>) Habitat: Waterfall spray zones, talus near cascading streams	X				X				X					
Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (<i>Tympanuchus Phasianellus columbianus</i>) Habitat: Grassland, shrubland, riparian, agriculture	X				X				X					
Common loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>) Habitat: Cold mountain lakes,	X				X				X					

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number	
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative						
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High			
nest in emergent vegetation															
Fisher <i>(Martes pennanti)</i> Habitat: Dense mature to old forest less than 6,000 feet in elevation and riparian	X				X					X					
Flammulated owl <i>(Otus flammeolus)</i> Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest		X				X					X			Y	WI-3
Gray Wolf <i>(Canis lupus)</i> Habitat: Ample big game populations, security from human activities		X				X					X			Y	WI-4
Harlequin duck <i>(Histrionicus histrionicus)</i> Habitat: White-water streams, boulder and cobble substrates	X				X					X					
Northern bog lemming <i>(Synaptomys borealis)</i> Habitat: Sphagnum meadows, bogs, fens with thick moss mats	X				X					X					
Peregrine falcon <i>(Falco peregrinus)</i> Habitat: Cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	X				X					X					
Pileated woodpecker <i>(Dryocopus pileatus)</i> Habitat: Late-successional		X				X					X			Y	WI-5

Wildlife	Impact												Can Impact be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest														
Townsend's big-eared bat <i>(Plecotus townsendii)</i> Habitat: Caves, caverns, old mines	X				X				X					
Big Game Species														
Elk		X				X				X			Y	WI-6
Whitetail		X				X				X			Y	WI-6
Mule Deer		X				X				X			Y	WI-6
Other	X				X				X					

Comments:

WI -1: The project area is located adjacent to non-recovery occupied habitat associated with the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) (*Wittinger 2002*) and grizzly bears may use the parcel at any time. To reduce adverse impacts to bears commercial forest management activities would be prohibited in the spring (April 1 – June 15). The proposed harvest would reduce stem spacing to approximately 20 feet between leave trees. These acres would continue to provide hiding cover at a reduced level after the logging is complete considering that at least 40% conifer canopy cover would be retained. However, approximately 1-5 acre patch cuts with very few trees would be scattered throughout the harvest unit to address insect outbreaks. Any roads that are constructed to access the parcel would effectively closed post-harvest, maintaining security for bears.

WI-2: The Project Area is located within the home range of a pair of bald eagles nesting on Mission Creek. However, the proposed harvest units are located more than 2 miles from the nest and outside of frequently used areas near the Mission Creek. Large snags and emergent trees which are used as perch sites would not be affected by the proposed activities.

WI-3: The proposed activities may improve flammulated owl habitat by decreasing stem spacing to 20-feet between leave-trees in 334 acres of potential flammulated owl habitat. Douglas-fir and western larch would be removed and ponderosa pine would be retained. However, diseased trees would be removed, potentially reducing the availability of snags for nesting. To mitigate this adverse effect, at least 2 large snags (>21 inches dbh) and 2 large snag recruits per acre would be retained.

WI-4: Wolf pack home ranges are located in the vicinity of the project area and wolves may use the project area at any time. Disturbance associated with forest management activities at den

and rendezvous locations can adversely affect wolves; however, timing restrictions would apply if den or rendezvous sites are documented (*ARM 33.11.430(1)(a)(b)*).

WI-5: Approximately 63 acres of suitable pileated woodpecker habitat would be affected by the salvage. Post-harvest, these acres are anticipated to continue providing suitable pileated woodpecker habitat, albeit at a reduced stand density and quality. The salvage would remove recently dead snags affected by bark beetles, reducing the availability of snags for foraging and nesting. However, mitigations would ensure that at least 2 large snags (>21 inches dbh) and 2 large snag recruits remain post-harvest per acre and that non-merchantable snags remain standing as long as they are not a safety hazard.

WI-6: The proposed harvest may affect big game winter range and would occur primarily on north facing slopes below 4,200 feet. The proposed harvest would reduce stem spacing to 20 feet between leave trees with scattered open 1-5 acre patch cuts, reducing thermal cover and visual screening. However, majority of the area is anticipated to continue providing visual screening and some thermal cover post-harvest, albeit at a reduced habitat quality. Any roads constructed to access the harvest units would be effectively closed post-harvest. Wintering game could be disturbed by the salvage considering that the activities could occur during the winter.

Wildlife Mitigations:

- If a threatened or endangered species, wolf dens, or undocumented nesting raptors are encountered, consult a DNRC biologist and develop additional mitigations that are consistent with the administrative rules for managing threatened and endangered species (*ARM 36.11.428* through *36.11.435*). Report grizzly bear sightings to CSKT Wildlife Management or CSKT Tribal Wardens.
- Prohibit contractors and purchasers from carrying firearms while on duty. Ensure that all food, garbage, and other attractants (e.g., petroleum products) are cleaned up and stored in a bear-resistant manner.
- Ensure that newly constructed road is closed effectively by using logging slash, kelly humps, or other methods post-harvest to ensure that motorized vehicles are not accessing the area. Close illegal firewood cutting roads with logging slash.
- Retain all ponderosa pine snags, grand fir snags, and unmerchantable snags in the unit. Ensure that at least 2 large snags and 2 large snag recruits (≥ 21 in dbh) per acre are retained throughout the harvest units. The largest size-class of available snags and recruits must be retained (regardless of species), but ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch are preferred leave species. Broken-top snags are acceptable for retention, but must be at least 6 feet tall.
- Retain 5-10 tons per acre of coarse woody debris in the harvest units.
- Prohibit commercial forest management activities from April 1 – June 15 to provide security for grizzly bears in the spring.

AIR QUALITY:

Air Quality	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Smoke	x				x				x					
Dust	x				x				x					
Action														
Smoke		x				x			x				yes	
Dust		x				x			x				no	1

Comments: 1. Grazing Lessee was concerned about firewood being taken illegally, about fence damage, and weeds.

Air Quality Mitigations: Dust from log hauling on Orr road can be abated as needed.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES / AESTHETICS / DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	x				x				x					
Aesthetics	x				x				x					
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	x				x				x					
Action														
Historical or Archaeological Sites	x				x				x					
Aesthetics	x				x				x					
Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, or Energy	x				x				x					

Impacts on the Human Population

Evaluation of the impacts on the proposed action including direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts on the Human Population.

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
No-Action														
Health and Human Safety	x				x				x					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production	x				x				x					
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	x				x				x					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	x				x				x					
Demand for Government Services	x				x				x					
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	x				x				x					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	x				x				x					
Social Structures and Mores	x				x				x					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	x				x				x					
Action														
Health and Human Safety	x				x				x					
Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production	x				x				x					
Quantity and Distribution of Employment	x				x				x					
Local Tax Base and Tax Revenues	x				x				x					
Demand for Government Services	x				x				x					

Will Alternative result in potential impacts to:	Impact												Can Impact Be Mitigated?	Comment Number
	Direct				Secondary				Cumulative					
	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High	No	Low	Mod	High		
Access To and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities	x				x				x					
Density and Distribution of population and housing	x				x				x					
Social Structures and Mores	x				x				x					
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity	x				x				x					

Other Appropriate Social and Economic Circumstances:

Costs, revenues and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives. They are not intended to be used as absolute estimates of return. The estimated stumpage is based on comparable sales analysis. This method compares recent sales to find a market value for stumpage. These sales have similar species, quality, average diameter, product mix, terrain, date of sale, distance from mills, road building and logging systems, terms of sale, or anything that could affect a buyer’s willingness to pay.

No Action: The No Action alternative would not generate any return to the trust at this time.

Action: The timber harvest would generate additional revenue for the Common Schools Trust. The estimated return to the trust for the proposed harvest is \$160,394.00 based on an estimated harvest of 1 Mmbf board feet (6,169tons) and an overall stumpage value of \$26 per ton. Costs, revenues, and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives, they are not intended to be used as absolute estimates of return.

References

DNRC 1996. State forest land management plan: final environmental impact statement (and appendixes). Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Forest Management Bureau, Missoula, Montana.

DNRC. 2010. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan: Final EIS, Volume II, Forest Management Bureau, Missoula, Montana.

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?

The proposed action does not have any uncertain risks that are extremely harmful.

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?

The proposed action does not have any impacts that are cumulatively or potentially significant.

Environmental Assessment Checklist Prepared By:

Name: Nick Aschenwald
Title: Forester
Date: 7/1/2015

Finding

Alternative Selected

The action alternative is selected

Significance of Potential Impacts

I find that the impacts of the proposed action alternative as described in this Environmental Assessment are not significant. This Environmental Analysis has been completed for the Pistol Creek Limited Access Timber Sale. After a thorough review of the EA, project file, response and discussions with Department and other specialists, Department policies, standards and guidelines, and the State Land Management Rules, and HCP rules I have taken the decision to choose the action alternative. I believe that this EA has described a good approximation what this project would accomplish. Salvage dead and dying timber before it loses its economic value, and improve stand health and vigor of the stand by thinning the remaining portions of the stand. This project will reduce the susceptibility of residual trees to epidemic insect infestations and outbreaks, and improve the availability of necessary nutrients, water, and sunlight that may be limited in this stand.

Need for Further Environmental Analysis

EIS

More Detailed EA

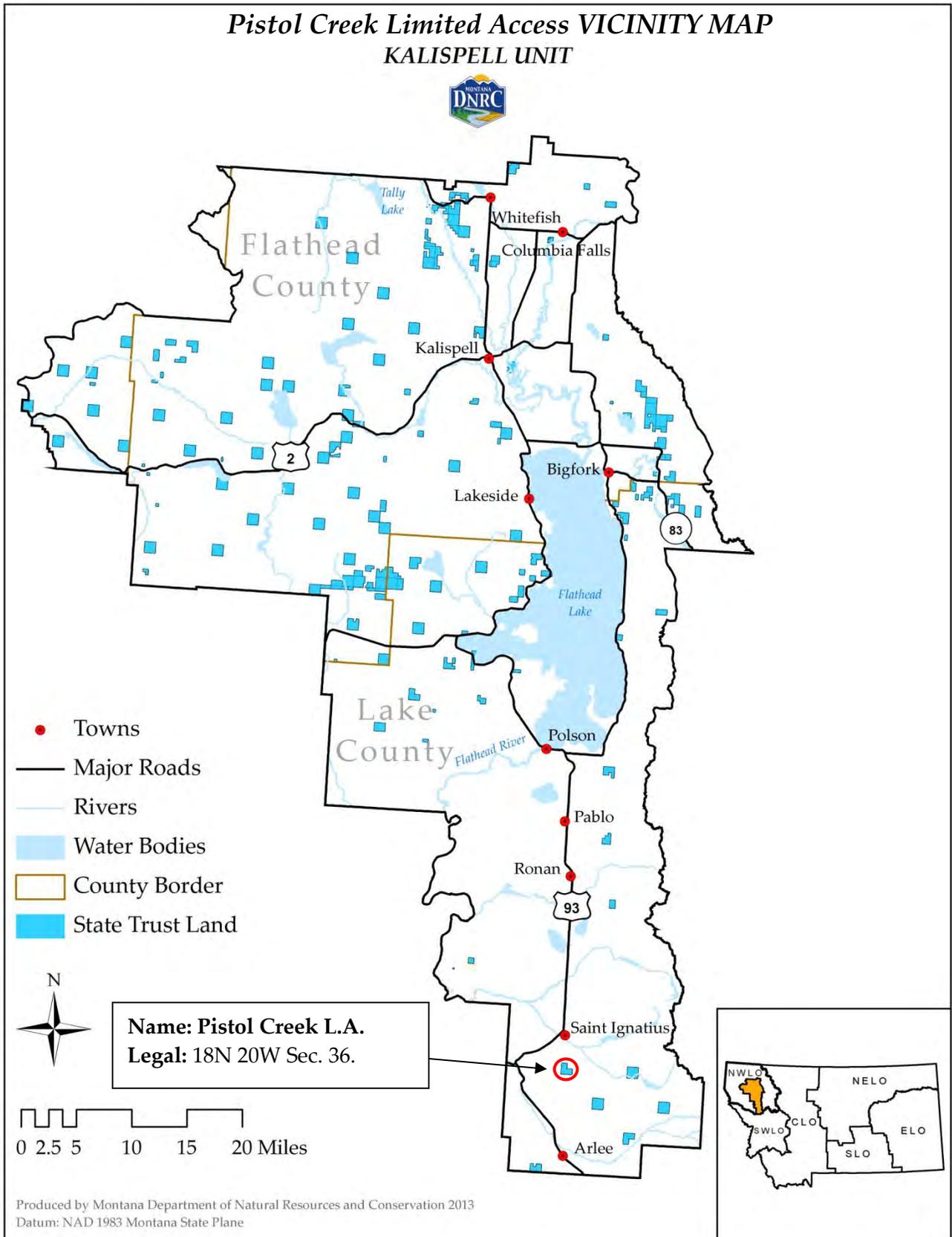
No Further Analysis

Environmental Assessment Checklist Approved By:

Name: David M. Poukish
Title: Kalispell Unit Manager
Date: 7/20/2015
Signature: /s/ David M. Poukish

Attachment A- Maps

A-1: Timber Sale Vicinity Map



A-2: Timber Sale Harvest Units

