

Finding of No Significant Impact

Ch'ets'tene'st Logging Unit – Coeur d'Alene Reservation

Description of the Proposed Action

Coeur d'Alene Tribal Forestry has prepared an Environmental Assessment for the Ch'ets'tene'st Logging Unit. This FONSI covers implementation of the proposed action including approximately 3,900,000 board feet of timber to be harvested from the Moses Management Tribal Unit (Moses). Six seed tree cuts, one selection cut, and one clear cut with reserves would be implemented as necessary to meet management objectives.

The proposed action is designed to fulfill the stated long-range goals and objectives of the Forest Management Plan, which include:

1. Protect the forests from insects, disease, trespass, and fire by stressing prevention;
2. Maintain or increase forest health and vigor through management activities;
3. Manage for multiple uses including (but not limited to) timber production, wildlife, recreation, water, grazing, and aesthetics;

Project Level Objectives

1. Remove overmature unhealthy grand fir and subalpine fir that are declining in health;
2. Harvest dense, mature, and overmature areas of mixed species in seven cutting blocks;
3. Protect multiple resource values;
4. Increase forest health in the proposed cutting by removing trees with diseases, insects, and those infected with mistletoe;
5. Regenerate cutting blocks to a mixture of ponderosa pine, western larch, and western white pine;
6. Provide some income to the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

The principal alternatives that were analyzed and evaluated during planning were:

1. No action alternative,
2. The preferred alternative (Proposed Action), and
3. An alternate action (Increased Harvest Meets FMP Annual Allowable Cut).

Alternatives to the Preferred Alternative

In the event that no action is to take place (Alternative 1), the cutting blocks would not be harvested and would continue to progress under natural successional processes. The mistletoe would continue to spread. Also, the root rot would continue to weaken trees increasing the chances to be blown over. The Tribe would lose future income by not capturing mortality before the next proposed timber harvest (10-15 years).

In the event that Alternative 3 takes place there would be an increased harvest volume of 6.8 MBF consisting of approximately 399 acres, in total. This alternative consists of the cutting blocks from Alternative 2 plus an additional 4 cutting blocks. The total treatments include: seven seed tree cuts, two sanitation cuts, two clear cuts with reserves, and one selection cut.

Finding

Based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Ch'ets'tene'st Project the preferred Alternative has been determined not to have a significant impact on the quality of the surrounding environment, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Reasons Supporting Finding

The EA discloses the environmental consequences of the preferred alternative, the alternate action, and "no action" on relevant issues. The following summarizes the consequences of the preferred alternative on the relevant issues.

1. Harvest level will be moderate since approximately 3.9 MMBF of timber will be removed on 228 forested acres out of 2,308 forested acres.
2. Watershed / Fisheries: Issues include increased sedimentation and runoff into Nehchen, Hangman, and Indian Creeks that might affect the redband trout habitat and population.
3. Soils / Canopy Cover: Soil erosion would be a concern due to a reduction of the tree canopy and the disturbance of the forest floor. Soil compaction could occur from operating heavy logging equipment on forest floors. Also, the loss of soil nutrients, profile disturbance, and exposure of bare soil could occur due to road openings and improvements, use of skid trails, and the location of landings.
4. Visual Impacts: Some of the cutting blocks would be highly visible from U.S. Highway 95. Adjacent landowners have also added significant timber harvesting acreage over the years as well that contributes to the visibility concerns from the highway.

Individuals and entities that may be significantly affected or interested in the preferred alternative may provide comments about this Finding and the accompanying EA to Coeur d'Alene Tribal Forestry, P.O. Box 408, Plummer, Idaho 83851 until April 25, 2013. These comments will be considered prior to implementing the preferred alternative.



Bureau of Indian Affairs – Acting Superintendent
Coeur d'Alene Agency
925 A Street
PO Box 287
Plummer, ID 83851

MAR 26 2013

Date

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for: Ch'ets'tene'st Project near Tensed, Idaho.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the EA and FONSI are available for public view at the addresses listed below. The proposed action is to remove approximately 2.9 MMBF of timber from the Moses Management Tribal Unit on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation.

The project area covers approximately 228 acres of forested land. The purpose and need for action are designed to increase forest health and regenerate timber stands that are dense, overmature, and/or are of poor health identified in the Coeur d'Alene Reservation Forest Management Plan, 2003 to 2017.

ADDRESS: Comments should be addressed to:
Bureau of Indian Affairs - Superintendent
Coeur d'Alene Agency
925 A Street
PO Box 287
Plummer, ID 83851
Phone: (208) 686-1887

This notice is published in accordance with Section 1503.1 of the Council of Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) implementing the procedural requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.) and the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 1-6), and is in the exercise authority delegated to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs by 209 DM 8.

DATE: Comments will be received during the 30 day comment period ending April 25, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kurt Mettler, Forest Manager at:
Coeur d' Alene Tribal Forestry
402 Anne Antelope Avenue
PO Box 408
Plummer, ID 83851
Phone: (208) 686-1315