RECORD OF DECISION

For the

North Lochsa Face Ecosystem Management Project

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Lochsa Ranger District
Clearwater National Forest
Idaho County, Idaho

November 2002

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Abstract: This document describes the decision for the North Lochsa Face Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS, November 2002) and the rationale for that decision. The decision is based on the analyses presented in the FSEIS, the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS, January 2002), and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS, June 1999).

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I. Introduction

a. The Project Area

The project area is in Idaho County, Idaho, in Townships 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 North, Ranges 6, 7, 8, and 9 East, Boise Meridian. The project area covers approximately 128,000 acres on the Lochsa Ranger District of the Clearwater National Forest that are mostly forested, steep, and mountainous. It lies between Highway 12 and the Lolo Motorway (Forest Road 500) just north of the small communities of Lowell and Syringa, Idaho. Lewiston, Idaho is 95 miles west of the area on Highway 12; the Nez Perce Indian Reservation, headquartered in Lapwai, adjoins the Forest to the west; and Missoula, Montana is 130 miles to the east. The Lochsa River, a designated Wild and Scenic River, runs adjacent to Highway 12. The project area includes Fish, Pete King, Deadman, Bimerick, Apgar, Glade, and Rye Patch creeks.

b. History of the North Lochsa Face Ecosystem Management Project

In January 1995, a team of Forest and District specialists started an assessment for the North Lochsa Face Landscape (see vicinity map in Appendix A). The assessment was completed in May 1996. The assessment described the ecological conditions of the North Lochsa Face area, focusing on structure, function and composition of the ecosystems. In addition, the assessment described the social values associated with this piece of land. Opportunities to improve the landscape condition were identified based on the ecological conditions and social considerations.

In August 1996, a Notice of Intent was issued which started the scoping process for the North Lochsa Face environmental analysis. In June 1997 a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was issued. In June 1999 a Final EIS was issued. Two Records of Decision (ROD), the Recreation and Access Management ROD and the Vegetation and Aquatic Management ROD, were issued in April 2000.

The District Ranger adopted Access Option 3 in the Recreation and Access Management ROD. The Access decision delineated motorized and non-motorized recreational use by major stream drainage, based on social values combined with the suitability/capability of the land to support different recreational experiences. Access Option 3 will maintain trail facilities, relocate and/or reconstruct problem trail stretches, provide road and trail signing and information, develop riding "loop" opportunities, and provide opportunities such as a range of challenging trail bike riding experiences. Friends of the Clearwater, Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, and the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee appealed this decision. The Regional Forester affirmed the Recreation and Access Management ROD in July 2000. The decision relating to the Recreation and Access Management is final, and the Regional Forester affirmed that decision; therefore it will not be revisited.

The Forest Supervisor adopted Alternative 3a *modified* in the Vegetation and Aquatic Management ROD. Alternative 3a included the actions described in Final EIS Alternative 3a and additional underburning and prescribed burning in the Fish and Hungery Creek drainages as described in Alternative 3. The Friends of the Earth, Resource Organization on Timber Supply, Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, and the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies appealed the decision. In July 2000, the Regional Forester *reversed* the decision and directed the Forest Supervisor to prepare a Supplemental EIS that clarified the environmental analyses related to road obliteration effects.

A Supplemental EIS was prepared in response to the Regional Forester's decision to reverse the Vegetation and Aquatic ROD. Therefore, the Supplemental EIS only addressed the decisions to be made regarding vegetation and aquatic management.

The Draft Supplemental EIS (DSEIS) was advertised for public comment in January 2002. Almost 200 comment letters were received. The Forest conducted a content analysis of the original comment letters in June 2002, coding and indexing the comment narratives. The original comment letters are available for review in Volumes 6 and 7 of the Project File, and the coded content analysis results are included in the Project File as well (Volume 18, Document 758). The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) then categorized and summarized the comments, and responded to them in detail. The IDT Response To Comments is included Appendix D of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS).

II. Changes Between the Final EIS, the Draft Supplemental EIS, and the Final Supplemental EIS

There are no significant changes between the Draft Supplemental EIS (DSEIS, January 2002) and the Final Supplemental EIS (FSEIS, October 2002). The FSEIS (Appendix D) includes the response to public comments on the DSEIS, and corrects some minor errors that appeared in the DSEIS.

This section summarizes the significant changes that were made between the Final EIS (FEIS, June 1999) and the DSEIS in response to public comments, and in response to direction from the Regional Forester:

Chapter 1 was updated with a new format that included a summary of the proposed action, a summary of the history of the project, additional information regarding the purpose and need for the project, information regarding Clearwater Forest Plan management direction, and an update to the decision framework.

Chapter 2 was modified to provide the reader a clearer understanding of the issues, the development of alternatives, and the description of alternatives. The following is a summary of the changes to Chapter 2.

- The issues were reviewed, clarified and updated based on comments, appeals and litigation.

- Two alternatives considered in detail were added.
- Alternatives that were not considered in detail were clarified, and one alternative was added.
- The No Action Alternative was modified to clearly reflect the intent of "no action." In addition, the remaining alternatives were updated to clearly show the actions that were included in each alternative.
- During development of the DSEIS some discrepancies in the alternative descriptions that were published in the FEIS were found. Most of the discrepancies were minor acreage differences between the broad scale alternative descriptions in the FEIS and the unit-by-unit acreage descriptions provided in the DSEIS. The discrepancies were the result of geographic information systems technology and database updates. One major difference was that the acreages between mixed severity burns and underburns were modified, although the total acreages remained close to those that were presented in the FEIS. The burning acreage differences resulted from prescription corrections. The DSEIS included more underburning acres, and less mixed severity burn acres, than were described in the FEIS.
- Design criteria/mitigations were clarified to fully describe the objectives, criteria and effectiveness.
- A unit-by-unit table, by alternative, was added to clearly show which units were included in each alternative.

In the FEIS, the affected environment was described in Chapter 3 and environmental consequences were evaluated in Chapter 4. In the DSEIS, the description of existing conditions and the effects analysis for each resource were combined in Chapter 3 for better readability.

In the DSEIS, in response to direction from the Regional Forester, the effects analyses related to road obliteration were clarified and updated.

III. The Decision

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision and rationale for implementation of the North Lochsa Face Ecosystem Management Project. I have decided to implement Alternative 5, as described in the DSEIS, with the following modifications: 1) to address public concerns about timber harvest in old growth stands, no old growth will be harvested as part of this decision; and 2) to address concerns about Canada lynx, precommercial thinning in lynx habitat will also be dropped from the selected actions. The environmental consequences of Alternative 5, as modified by this Record of Decision, are within the actions that were analyzed for Alternative 5 in the DSEIS.

I will refer to Alternative 5 Modified as the "Selected Alternative" in this Record of Decision. The stands that will be dropped from Alternative 5 to avoid timber harvest in old growth and precommercial thinning in lynx habitat are shown in Table ROD-1. Dropping the stands listed in Table ROD-1 reduced the estimated timber harvest volume from 49 MMBF to 42 MMBF.

No old growth will be harvested as part of this decision.

Table ROD-1: Old Growth and Lynx Habitat Stands Dropped from the Selected Alternative

Stand Number	Unit Number	Acres	Action to be Dropped	Watershed
51305067	56	10	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51306021	56	93	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51306060	56	2	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51306061	56	1	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51305078	57	14	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51305078	57	2	Commercial Thin	WF Deadman Cr
51305031	58	27	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51305031	58	5	Commercial Thin	WF Deadman Cr
51205046	62	13	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51206009	62	11	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51206011	63	28	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51202006	66	35	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51202006	66	2	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51202017	66	52	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51201030	69	15	Commercial Thin	Apgar Cr
51207035	70	23	Commercial Thin	SF Canyon Cr
51207030	71	10	Commercial Thin	SF Canyon Cr
51207038	71	12	Commercial Thin	SF Canyon Cr
51207029	72	12	Commercial Thin	SF Canyon Cr
51207029	72	1	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51208029	72	4	Commercial Thin	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51209029	72	2	Commercial Thin	SF Canyon Cr
51201010	88	34	Regen Harvest	Apgar Cr
51202066	88	1	Regen Harvest	Apgar Cr
51202066	88	13	Regen Harvest	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
52007134	97	15	Commercial Thin	Pete King above Walde Cr
51105010	101	295	Precommercial Thin	Fish Cr above Hungery Cr
52005058	109	1	Salvage	Walde Cr
52005059	109	33	Salvage	Walde Cr
52003009	110	29	Salvage	Placer Cr
52003012	112	9	Salvage	Placer Cr
51203042	119	47	Regen Harvest	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51308021	182	32	Commercial Thin	EF Deadman Cr
51201013	185	42	Commercial Thin	Apgar Cr
51201013	185	1	Commercial Thin	Glade Cr
51202009	189	79	Regen Harvest	Canyon Cr above SF Canyon Cr
51404002	218	49	Regen Harvest	Lochsa Tributaries below Boulder Cr
52005058	251	9	Salvage	Walde Cr
52005126	251	13	Salvage	Walde Cr
52005128	251	16	Salvage	Walde Cr
52005186	251	5	Salvage	Walde Cr
52005186	251	1	Salvage	Placer Cr
52005058	252	40	Regen Harvest	Walde Cr

a. Selected Actions and Design Criteria

The Selected Alternative includes the following actions:

Timber Harvest: Timber harvest will occur on 4,032 acres, including regeneration harvest on 1,842 acres, commercial thinning on 1,841 acres, salvage on 349 acres, and precommercial thinning on 995 acres.

- **Timber Harvest In Roadless Areas:** No regeneration harvest units are located within the North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area, and no regeneration harvest will occur within the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

- **Clearcutting:** No clearcutting or off-site conversion will occur.

- **Tree Retention:** The percent of trees that will be retained on site will vary, depending on the LTA. On Breaklands, 50% or more of the trees will be retained; on Colluvial Midslopes, 35% will be retained; and on Old Surfaces, 25% will be retained.

- **Openings:** A natural appearance will be retained after harvest; however, openings may be created that range from 40 to 450 acres in size.

- **Commercial Thinning**: Commercial thinning will be implemented on 1,841 acres.

- **Salvage Harvest:** 349 acres will be salvage harvested. Most of these acres are in the Walde Mountain area, with some units in the Canyon Creek drainage. Approximately 10% of the stand volumes, consisting of dead, dying, and high-risk trees, will be harvested.

- **Precommercial Thinning:** Approximately 995 acres of stands that are overstocked with trees of noncommercial size will be thinned to about 400-500 trees per acre. These stands are located mostly in the roaded portions of the Pete King and Canyon creek drainages. In some stands, the shade tolerant species such as grand fir, cedar, subalpine fir, and mountain hemlock will be removed in greater numbers to increase the percentage of early seral species such as Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, white pine, larch, and lodgepole pine that will remain after thinning.

- **Helicopter Yarding:** Conventional logging systems will be used on approximately 86% of the area to be logged. The remaining 14% of the area will require helicopter yarding. One landing will be located in a large grassy area 1.5 miles up Pete King Creek.

Prescribed Fire: Prescribed fire will occur on approximately 12,530 acres, including 5,485 acres of mixed severity burning and 7,045 acres of underburning.

Temporary Roads: A total of 3.5 miles of temporary roads will be constructed, mostly in the Pete King, Canyon, and Deadman drainages. These will be used for yarder access, and will be obliterated after use.

Permanent Roads: No permanent roads will be constructed. 1.5 miles of Pete King Road #453 will be reconstructed to provide access to a helicopter landing. Reconstruction of this road segment will improve surface drainage and provide for safe use.

To improve forest health and restore certain components of the North Lochsa Face ecosystem, the following treatment activities will also be implemented. They are common to all the action alternatives that were described in the DSEIS, including the Selected Alternative. Appendix B of the DSEIS lists detailed management requirements and design features that would be applied to the selected actions to reduce potential environmental effects.

Control of Noxious Weeds: To eradicate new invaders (weed species previously not known to occur within the project area) and to reduce the density and extent of established noxious weeds, an integrated pest management approach to weed control will be implemented along area roads and trails, which act as seed depositories and transportation corridors for non-native plant species. The following management techniques will be used for specific sites and plant species (see Appendix E of the DSEIS for detailed locations of weed species and treatment options):

- **Physical/Mechanical**: Treatment, consisting of hand grubbing, mowing, tilling, or burning, will take place before seed production, with mowing or tilling being repeated during the growing season. Approximately ½ acre of dalmation toadflax and ½ acre of scotch broom will be hand-pulled, and 1 acre of scotch thistle will be grubbed.
- **Chemical:** Herbicides considered under chemical control scenarios include Clopyralid (TRANSLINE) and Dicamba (VETERAN 10G). Herbicides will be used to treat those species addressed by the Clearwater Basin Weed Coordinating Committee as having an eradication objective, and where infestation levels warrant an eradication objective. Within the entire project area, herbicides will treat a maximum of 500 acres (16 sites), representing 0.035 percent of the 128,000-acre project area. Some of these sites, as noted in the treatment table in Appendix E of the DSEIS, will include the distribution of biological control agents or mechanical control measures outside of roadsides and areas, where proximity to water sources (streams and/or high water tables) make herbicide applications inappropriate. Revegetation efforts will follow, and follow-up treatments will occur based on monitoring of application effectiveness. It is anticipated that two consecutive years of herbicide application will be needed, as revegetation with desired species reduces the likelihood of reinfestation within these sites.
- **Biological:** Biological control is a slow process, often requiring ten to twenty years to be effective, and is the deliberate introduction and establishment of natural enemies to reduce the target plants' competitive or reproductive capacities. Its

purpose is not to eradicate the target plants, but to reduce weed density and rates of spread to acceptable levels. Predatory insects are commonly released against noxious weeds. The biocontrol agent *Larinus minutus* will be released at several sites to control spotted knapweed and Canada thistle.

The method(s) of choice for particular infestations is dependent upon weed species, infestation size, land use patterns and location. All areas of herbicide application will be followed by an aggressive revegetation effort. Selected seed mixes fill soil horizon niches and reduce the risk of subsequent reinvasion. These mixes are appropriate for early, shallow rooted species; mid-season species with moderately deep roots; and late-season species with deeply rooted species. Revegetation plans will consider disturbance regimes, species availability, and species performance (site habitat characteristics, germination requirements, growth rates and competition between species interactions).

Road Obliteration: To reduce the risk of sediment entering live streams and to encourage the natural flushing of instream sediments, approximately 66 miles of roads will be obliterated that are no longer needed for management activities. This will require the use of heavy equipment (excavators and dozers) to remove culverts, improve drainage, reduce road fills, and scarify compacted surfaces to promote revegetation. Priority for treatment is based on: 1) high risk of landslide or debris torrent; 2) proximity to fish-bearing streams; and 3) chronic sediment sources. Removing these roads from the system will 1) decrease erosion and instream sediment deposition; 2) promote natural sediment cleaning processes; and 3) improve the rate of spring flow recovery to more natural conditions.

Road Long-Term Maintenance: In addition to the 66 miles of road obliteration described above, another 54 miles of roads are proposed for "long-term maintenance." These roads will not be needed for timber access in the next 20 or more years. Long-term maintenance is the practice of retaining existing roads for future use without relying on frequent road maintenance to keep the roads open. These roads will be closed to motorized traffic, and will be placed in a condition to assure they are self-maintaining, with stable drainage. This practice may or may not include removal of culverts and ditches. Encroaching vegetation will not be removed. This practice will: 1) reduce road maintenance costs; 2) provide for future access; and 3) minimize erosion. A table in Appendix D of the DSEIS identifies the roads in each major drainage that will be obliterated or placed in long-term maintenance.

Sediment Trap Removal: There are two sediment traps in Walde Creek and two sediment traps in Pete King Creek that were installed in the mid-1980s to trap some of the bedload sediment (primarily sand) that was coursing through the streams. These traps were cleaned annually until 1999. To assure floodplain/stream channel integrity, these sediment traps will be removed, and the sites will be restored to approximate natural channel cross-section conditions.

Planting Riparian Areas: To restore streamside vegetation and to reestablish large wood that will provide shade, channel stability, and fish habitat diversity, cottonwoods will be interplanted on 450 acres in a six-mile long strip along Fish Creek. A similar

150-acre strip along 2 miles of Pete King Creek will be planted with conifers and deciduous tree species.

Programmatic Forest Plan Burning Amendment: The Selected Alternative (Alternative 5 Modified), and all action alternatives except Alternatives 4 and 4a, will include a programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the maximum burned acres from "wildfire" to "unscheduled" for certain management areas that have a primary resource emphasis other than timber (see Appendix C of the DSEIS). This will be done in an effort to balance suppression costs with resource values lost, while also considering firefighter safety. This amendment will allow the use of alternative suppression strategies (confine and contain within the Lochsa Research Natural Area).

Understory burning and mixed severity fire within the North Lochsa Face analysis area will improve forest health, reduce the risk of severe wildfire, and maintain and restore ecological processes, function, structure, and composition. The burning proposed in the North Lochsa Face analysis area will achieve these objectives by altering tree density and composition, reducing woody fuel loads and fuel ladders, and maintaining air quality standards.

b. Selected Monitoring Activities

The following monitoring will continue on the Clearwater National Forest (CNF) and/or the Lochsa District:

- Regulations of the Idaho Forest Practices Act.
- Annually, at least one completed timber sale project will be monitored by the District and Forest to determine if: (1) requirements of the EA or EIS and decision document were implemented correctly; and (2) desired/predicted results and effects occurred. The results will be retained in the District files and used for future reference. Successful application of planned vegetative management practices (including roading practices) in or near sensitive areas, erosion control, and access management are of particular interest.
- For timber sales, certified sale administrators will monitor the requirements of the timber sale contract, which will reflect the requirements described in this Record of Decision and the SEIS.
- All eight major watersheds within the project area that flow into the Lochsa River are currently being monitored for summer water temperatures. These streams and a number of tributaries will be monitored for water temperatures. Substrate monitoring is currently ongoing and will continue in the Pete King Creek, Canyon Creek, and Deadman Creek drainages. Ongoing fish population monitoring projects will continue in the Pete King Creek, Canyon Creek, Deadman Creek, and Fish Creek (including Hungery Creek) drainages. Stream channel and habitat conditions were surveyed in 1991 and 1997 in the Pete King Creek and Canyon Creek drainages, and in the Deadman Creek drainage in 1999.
- Pacific dogwood plants will be monitored during reconstruction of the access road to Bimerick helicopter landing, and prior to, during, and following prescribed

burning in the Lochsa RNA. Evergreen kittentails in the RNA will also be monitored prior to, during and after the burning in the RNA. The RNA monitoring will be done in conjunction with the Research Station scientists.

- New plantations, established after harvest, will be monitored for five years following planting to ensure that the land is successfully reforested (funded by KV).
- The CNF will monitor sediment delivery from road obliteration to better quantify the effects of this activity. A subset of the road obliteration activities that have the potential to deliver sediment to the streams will be monitored. The monitoring will be designed to quantify sediment delivery, and to the extent possible allow inference to the application of this activity in other areas. The results shall be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service each March following the field season data was collected.
- The CNF will monitor the effects of the first two years of mixed severity burns. Specifically, the CNF will monitor the effects of the burns on Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas to determine if additional mitigation should be applied. A report will be produced that describes where, when, acreage, and method of treatment, methods of evaluating effects, the effects of the prescribed burning, and any additional mitigation that should be applied to future burns. The CNF will report their findings and any added mitigation measures to the National Marine Fisheries Service for concurrence prior to proceeding with the next year's burns..
- Monitor prescribed burning in Fish "C" reaches (see the discussion about staggered units in Management Requirements and Design Features, Appendix B, DSEIS). If burning the first year does not result in any changes to stream reaches, then burning does not need to be staggered.
- See design criteria (DSEIS, Appendix B) for heritage resources for the following sites: 10-IH-558, 10-IH-2370, 10-IH-2371, 10-IH-2372, 10-IH-2373, 10-IH-2374, 10-IH-2145, 10-IH-2146, 10-IH-1649
- In consultation with the Idaho SHPO, and in participation with the Nez Perce National Historic Park, a heritage resource management and monitoring plan has been developed that will protect culturally modified trees and other historic properties from effects. This plan will develop monitoring and mitigation measures for individual sites and will be submitted to the Idaho SHPO for review and approval. On an annual basis, no later than March 1, reports will be prepared and submitted to Idaho SHPO and the Nez Perce National Historic Park that will document accomplishments under the plan, results of monitoring, and recommendations for amendments. The plan may be updated annually as needed, and the Nez Perce Tribe will be invited to comment and provide input to the development and updating of this plan.
- Where pre-burning activities have been performed (e.g. fuels reduction, back burning, or wrapping), and in specified cases in other types of treatment areas such as salvage or thinning units, monitoring of resource conditions may be required during project implementation. A qualified archeologist will monitor resource

conditions and in the case of burn units; a fire crew will be pre-positioned in strategic locations to protect the resource.

c. Selected Site-Specific Forest Plan Amendments and Corrections

Programmatic Forest Plan Burning Amendment: Alternative 5 Modified will include a programmatic Forest Plan amendment to change the maximum burned acres from "wildfire" to "unscheduled" for certain management areas that have a primary resource emphasis other than timber (see Appendix C of the DSEIS). This will be done in an effort to balance suppression costs with resource values lost, while also considering firefighter safety. This amendment will allow the use of alternative suppression strategies (confine and contain within the Lochsa Research Natural Area).

IV. Reasons for the Decision

My decision is based on how well the alternatives address public desires and concerns (see Appendix D of the FSEIS), the project purpose and need, direction from the Forest Plan, and ecosystem management principles. These same factors also guided the development of the alternatives presented in the DEIS and FEIS, and the formulation of Alternative 6 in the DSEIS.

All of the action alternatives are consistent with Forest Plan direction and ecosystem management principles. Also, all of the action alternatives respond to the purpose and need for action, although to varying degrees. The greatest differences between the action alternatives result from their responses to the issues and concerns that were expressed by the public.

In reaching my decision, I evaluated all the alternatives against the following criteria. I considered the short-term effects of various courses of action, and weighed these against long-term benefits. The following discussion summarizes how well each alternative meets the decision criteria. All things considered, Alternative 5 Modified provides the best balance of short-term effects and long-term benefits.

a. Decision Criteria – Purpose and Need for Action

Table ROD-2, on Page 17 of this ROD, displays the following information in tabular format. The following discussion compares Alternative 5 Modified to the Purpose and Need to (DSEIS, pages 1-7 through 1-23):

Improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk, restore ecological processes, and replace patches at historic disturbance levels:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the acres of timber harvest and prescribed burning that each would implement.

Alternative 5 Modified will improve forest health and ecological conditions by restoring vegetative conditions. It will implement 12,530 acres of prescribed fires, including 5,485 acres of mixed-severity burns and 7,045 acres of understory burns.

The selected actions also include 1,842 acres of regeneration harvest to change species composition, achieve the desired age class/size distribution and structure patterns, 1,841 acres of commercial thinning that will retain up to 70% of existing trees on all LTA's, and 349 acres of salvage to remove approximately 10% of stand volume in the units treated, consisting of dead, dying, and high-risk trees.

The selected actions include mixed-severity prescribed burns that will replicate historic fire disturbance processes. Although these fires will not consume all of the trees and shrubs, the size of openings created will range from 50 to 500 acres. The mixed-severity burns will be implemented over a 5-year period. Only a few burns will occur the first year. They will be monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the prescriptions in meeting land management objectives.

Prescribed underburns that are included in the selected actions will reintroduce fire as an ecological process, and will help perpetuate stand compositions and structures that naturally occur on these landscapes.

Alternative 1 would harvest, prescribed burn, or thin 0 acres; Alternative 2 would harvest burn, or thin 21,885 acres; Alternative 3 would harvest, burn, or thin 21,230 acres; Alternative 3a would harvest, burn, or thin 16,755 acres; Alternative 4 would harvest, burn, or thin 6,870 acres; Alternative 4a would harvest, burn, or thin 6,835 acres; Alternative 5 would harvest, burn or thin 18,695 acres; Alternative 5 Modified would harvest, burn, or thin 17,557 acres; and Alternative 6 would harvest, burn, or thin 21,120 acres.

Remove off-site pine:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the amount of off-site pine that each would remove.

Alternative 5 Modified does not include timber harvest or prescribed burning in the off-site pine stands in the Bimerick drainage.

Alternatives 1, 4, 4a, and 5 would not remove off-site pine. Alternatives 2, 3, 3a, and 6 would each remove 2,220 acres of off-site pine.

Reduce stand densities and favor resilient early seral species:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the acres of thinning and underburning that each would implement.

Alternative 5 Modified includes commercial and precommercial thinning that will remove suppressed trees, usually of smaller diameter, providing more water and nutrients for the trees left on-site. Stand densities will be reduced to historic levels. Thinning in younger stands will promote faster tree growth of the remaining trees, and will reduce stand densities to historic levels. Thinning in older stands will retain their vigor and allow them to live longer, contributing to stand diversity and providing old forest characteristics across the landscape for a longer period of time.

Alternative 1 would thin or underburn 0 acres; Alternative 2 would thin or underburn 10,855 acres; Alternative 3 would thin or underburn 10,605 acres; Alternative 3a would thin or underburn 10,445 acres; Alternative 4 would thin or underburn 4,300 acres; Alternative 4a would thin or underburn 4,265 acres; Alternative 5 would thin or underburn 10,640 acres; Alternative 5 Modified would thin or underburn 9,881 acres; and Alternative 6 would thin or underburn 10,210 acres.

Control noxious weeds:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the amount of noxious weed treatments that each would implement.

Alternative 5 Modified includes an Integrated Pest Management approach to weed control along roads and trails, which act as seed depositories and transportation corridors for non-native plant species. Management techniques will include physical/mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments.

All of the other action alternatives would include the same Integrated Pest Management approach to week control that will be implemented for Alternative 5 Modified. Alternative 1 would not implement noxious weed control.

Improve aquatic conditions:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the amount of road obliteration, long-term road maintenance, riparian planting, and sediment trap removal that each would implement.

Alternative 5 Modified includes road obliteration, road long-term maintenance, riparian planting, and sediment trap removal in Walde Creek and Pete King Creek. These actions will minimize erosion and promote natural sediment-flushing processes, while improving shade, channel stability, and fish habitat diversity.

All of the other action alternatives would include these actions as well. Alternative 1 would not include watershed improvement activities.

Provide economic benefits to local communities:

For this component of the Purpose and Need, I compared the alternatives based on the acres of regeneration harvest, off-site pine conversion, commercial thinning, and salvage that each would implement.

Historically, logging has been the primary means of support and a way of life for local community residents. Most of the local communities remain dependent on timber harvest for economic survival. The timber harvest that will be implemented for Alternative 5 Modified will not only achieve vegetation management objectives; it will also benefit those people who work in the mills and wood products industry.

Alternative 1 would implement 0 acres of timber harvest; Alternative 2 would implement 8,065 acres of timber harvest; Alternative 3 would implement 7,410 acres of timber harvest; Alternative 3a would implement 7,905 acres of timber harvest; Alternatives 4 and 4a would implement 4,875 acres of timber harvest; Alternative 5 would implement 4,875 acres of timber harvest; Alternative 5 Modified would implement 4,032 acres of timber harvest; and Alternative 6 would implement 7,290 acres of timber harvest.

b. Decision Criteria – Response to Public Concerns and Issues (FSEIS Appendix D)

This section compares Alternative 5 Modified to the issue of:

No road construction of any kind:

Alternatives 3a, 4, 4a, 5, and 5 Modified would not include permanent system road construction, would not construct roads of any kind in roadless areas, and would construct only 3.5 miles of temporary roads, so they would partially respond to this issue. Alternative 6 is the same, except that it would construct only 3.2 miles of temporary roads, so Alternative 6 responds partially to this issue as well. Alternative 2 would not respond to this issue because it would include both permanent and temporary road construction. Alternative 3 would respond to this issue the best of the action alternatives because it would include no road construction of any kind.

Permanent road construction versus temporary road construction:

Please see the answer to the issue above, "No road construction of any kind."

Burning trees that have potential commercial value:

Alternative 3a would respond to this issue by dropping units in Fish and Hungery creeks that would burn trees that have potential commercial value. Alternatives 4 and 4a also would not include these units. These units would be included in Alternatives 2, 3, 5, 5 Modified, and 6, however. Therefore, the selected actions do not respond to this issue as well as Alternatives 3a, 4, or 4a would.

Activities in the North Lochsa Face Roadless Area, the Lochsa Research Natural Area, and the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor:

Alternatives 5 and 5 Modified would implement prescribed burns, but not timber harvest, in inventoried roadless areas, so the selected alternative partially responds to this issue. Alternatives 2, 3, 3a, and 6 would include both timber harvest and prescribed burning within inventoried roadless areas, the Lochsa Research Natural Area, and the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor, so they do not respond to this issue. Alternatives 4 and 4a would not implement prescribed burns or timber harvest in inventoried roadless areas or in the Lochsa Research Natural Area, and in addition, Alternative 4a would drop a burning unit that is in the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor. All of the action alternatives analyzed in the DSEIS, except for Alternatives 4 and 4a, would include the following burning units in the Lochsa Research Natural Area: Unit 23 (180-acre

prescribed burn), Unit 227 (339 acres out of a 387-acre underburning unit), Unit 229 (63-acre underburn), and Unit 230 (84-acre underburn).

No timber harvest in old growth:

Alternative 5 Modified and Alternative 6 do not include harvest in old growth. Alternatives 2, 3, 3a, 4, and 4a would all include varying amounts of timber harvest in old growth, so they do generally do not respond to this issue.

Precommercial thinning in lynx habitat:

Alternative 1, 5 Modified, and 6 would not include precommercial thinning in lynx habitat. Alternatives 2, 3, 3a, 4, 4a would include 295 acres (Unit 101) of precommercial thinning in lynx habitat.

Table ROD-2 (Page ROD-17) *qualitatively* summarizes how each alternative compares to the others, based on the decision criteria. A "+" indicates a desirable effect, "++" indicates a stronger desirable effect, "-" indicates a negative effect, etc. These indicators are not quantitative; in other words, they do not generally indicate any absolute or measurable value. They are presented here only to indicate how I compared each alternative to the others when making my decision.

V. Authority for The Decision

As Forest Supervisor of the Clearwater National Forest, I am authorized to manage the Forest in accordance with applicable laws and regulations set forth by congressional legislation and executive policy to include implementation of the Forest Plan. I have been delegated authority as the Deciding Official by the Regional Forester for the decisions outlined in this Record of Decision.

VI. Public Involvement

The Lochsa Ranger District began to prepare the North Lochsa Face Landscape Assessment in 1995. The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) solicited comments from landowners, residents, American Indian tribes, state and federal agencies and other interested parties related to resource management and desired conditions in the North Lochsa Face area. Two public workshops were held to discuss ecosystem management concepts and the North Lochsa Face assessment. A social assessment was also completed.

The public involvement process for the recreation and access management proposal, as well as the vegetative and aquatic management proposal, has been quite extensive. On August 9, 1996 the Clearwater National Forest published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register. The Lochsa District's efforts to solicit public comments on the North Lochsa Face proposal included mailings, focus interviews, one-on-one discussions, public meetings, field trips, open house meetings, and a public hearing. Over 20 individual meetings, open houses, and field trips were held to provide the public with opportunities to understand the project, identify concerns, and develop solutions to the issues.

Table ROD-2: Alternatives Rated by Decision Criteria

Decision Criteria*	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 3a	Alt 4/4a	Alt 5	Alt 5 Mod.	Alt 6
Restore Ecological Processes*	--	++	++	++	+	++	++	++
Remove Off-site Pine	--	+	+	+	--	--	--	+
Reduce Stand Densities**	--	++	++	++	+	++	++	++
Noxious Weed Control	--	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Improve Aquatic Conditions	--	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Local Economic Benefits**	--	++	++	++	+	+	+	++
No Road Construction	++	--	++	-	-	-	-	-
No Permanent Road Construction	++	--	++	++	++	++	++	++
Burn Commercial Timber	++	--	--	++	++	--	--	--
NLFRA**** LRNA LWSRC	++	--	--	-	++	-	-	--
Harvest In Old Growth *****	++	--	-	--	--	++	++	++
Precommercial Thinning in Lynx Habitat	++	--	--	--	--	++	++	++

* Ranked by acres of timber harvest and prescribed burning.
** Ranked by acres of thinning and underburning.
*** Ranked by acres of regeneration harvest, off-site conversion, commercial thinning, and salvage.
**** North Lochsa Face Roadless Area, Lochsa Research Natural Area, and Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor.
***** "++" denotes the least old growth harvest and " - -" denotes the most old growth harvest.

The DEIS was issued in June 1997. Because of public concern regarding prescribed burning proposed in the Fish Creek drainage, the public comment period for the DEIS was extended to March 2, 1998. The Forest hosted a public hearing in February 1998 to record comments regarding prescribed burning. Over 300 people attended, and over 140 comments were recorded and analyzed. The FEIS was issued in June 1999 with an additional 45-day comment period. The Records of Decision (ROD's) for the Vegetation and Aquatic Management proposal, and the Recreation and Access Management

proposal, were issued in April 2000. Both decisions were appealed. The Regional Forester affirmed the Recreation and Access Management decision; however, he reversed the Vegetation and Aquatic Management decision. The Regional Forester then directed the Forest to complete a Supplemental EIS to clarify the environmental analysis related to the effects of road obliteration.

In December 2000, a letter was sent to interested parties stating that a Supplemental EIS was being prepared in response to the Regional Foresters decision to reverse the Vegetation and Aquatic Management ROD. The 45-day comment period following publication of the Draft Supplemental EIS (DSEIS) ended on March 11, 2002. A more detailed chronological listing of events can be found in Chapter 1 of the DSEIS, beginning on Page 1-2.

The Nez Perce Tribe was consulted during all phases of the North Lochsa Face planning effort. The Tribe was consulted on fisheries and heritage resource issues in particular, and participated in the analysis and in the development of the memorandum of agreement for outlining additional survey and protection measures (Project File Volume 2, Document 101 page 4; SEIS Page 3-328). Consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe will be ongoing during project implementation according to the additional survey and consultation requirements for heritage resources outlined in the DSEIS on Page 3-332.

VII. Alternatives Considered

This section includes a brief discussion of the alternatives that I considered when making my decision. The alternatives considered in detail are described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-9 through 2-23.

Pages 2-10 through 2-12 of the DSEIS describe the management activities that would be common to all of the action alternatives. Those activities include control of noxious weeds, road obliteration, placing roads in long-term maintenance status, sediment trap removal, riparian planting, and a programmatic Forest Plan burning amendment, except that the Forest Plan burning amendment would not be implemented for Alternatives 4 or 4a.

Pages 2-12 through 2-14 of the DSEIS describe monitoring that would occur for all action alternatives. Ongoing monitoring would include annual timber sale implementation monitoring, water temperature monitoring within and downstream from the project area, reforestation monitoring, sediment delivery from road obliteration, implementation and effectiveness monitoring for prescribed burns, and heritage resource monitoring during and after implementation of management activities.

a. Alternative 1 (No Action)

Alternative 1 is described in the DSEIS on Page 2-15. Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative.

Ecosystems change on their own even without human influences. Fire is the primary agent of change within the North Lochsa Face ecosystem. The "No Action" Alternative means that management action taken by the Forest Service would be current activities permitted by the Forest Plan and covered under other NEPA documents. Although this alternative provides a baseline for comparing the environmental consequences of the other alternatives to the existing condition (36 CFR 1502.14), it is potentially an appropriate management option that could be selected by the Responsible Official.

No road obliteration, sediment trap removal or riparian planting would occur under the No Action Alternative, as displayed in the Final EIS.

b. Alternative 2

Alternative 2 is described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-15 through 2-19. Alternative 2 was the Proposed Action in the FEIS. It was developed to respond to the Purpose and Need for action. It focuses on commercial thinning, salvaging and underburning to reduce tree densities; reintroducing fire to the ecosystem to improve forest health; and contributing timber products to the economy.

Alternative 2 would implement management activities on approximately 21,885 acres (17 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 73 MMBF. Table ROD-3 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 2.

Table ROD-3: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 2

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	5,485 acres
Underburn	7,045 acres
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,860 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	2,220 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,520 acres
Salvage	465 acres
Precommercial Thin	1,290 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	1.1 miles
Temporary Road Construction (10 temporary roads)	3.7 miles
Reconstruction	13 miles

c. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 is described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-19 through 2-21. Alternative 3 was the Preferred Alternative in the DEIS. It was developed to respond to the issue of road construction. It includes the activities from Alternative 2 that could be accomplished

without any permanent or temporary road construction. Alternative 3 includes about 405 acres less of regeneration harvest, and 250 acres less of commercial thinning, than Alternative 2.

Alternative 3 would implement management activities on approximately 21,230 acres (17 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 67 MMBF. Table ROD-4 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 3.

Table ROD-4: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 3

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	5,485 acres
Underburn	7,045 acres
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,455 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	2,220 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,270 acres
Salvage	465 acres
Precommercial Thin	1,290 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	0 miles
Temporary Road Construction	0 miles
Reconstruction	13 miles

d. Alternative 3a

Alternative 3a is described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-22 through 2-24. Alternative 3a was the Preferred Alternative in the FEIS. It was developed to respond to the purpose and need for action, and to respond to the issues of prescribed fire versus commercial timber and transportation planning. Prescribed burning units within Fish and Hungery creeks that would burn trees that have potential commercial value were dropped. Harvest units that would require temporary roads, but not permanent roads, were retained. Alternative 3a would include 160 acres less of regeneration harvest, 4,560 acres less of mixed severity burning, and 410 acres less of underburning, than Alternative 2.

Alternative 3a would implement management activities on approximately 16,755 acres (13 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 70 MMBF. Table ROD-5 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 3a.

Table ROD-5: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 3a

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	925 acres
Underburn	6,635 acres
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,700 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	2,220 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,520 acres
Salvage	465 acres
Precommercial Thin	1,290 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	0 miles
Temporary Road Construction (9 temporary roads)	3.5 miles
Reconstruction	13 miles

e. Alternatives 4 and 4a

Alternatives 4 and 4a are described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-24 through 2-27. Alternative 4 was developed to meet the Purpose and Need for Action while addressing public concerns about activities in the North Lochsa Face Roadless Area. No management activities would occur in the North Lochsa Face Roadless Area, and no permanent road construction would occur. In addition, no prescribed burning would occur in the Lochsa Research Natural Area, and all but one underburning unit would be dropped in the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Alternative 4 would drop the off-site conversion (clearcutting) units in Bimerick Creek, and the mixed severity burning. Alternative 4 would include 755 acres less of regeneration harvest, 215 acres less of commercial thinning, and 6,340 acres less of underburning, than Alternative 2.

Alternative 4a would drop 35 acres of underburning in the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Otherwise it is the same as Alternative 4.

Alternative 4 would implement management activities on approximately 6,870 acres (6 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 48 MMBF. Table ROD-6 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 4 and 4a.

Table ROD-6: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 4

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	0 acres
Underburn	705 acres*
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,105 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	0 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,305 acres
Salvage	465 acres
Precommercial Thin	1,290 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	0 miles
Temporary Road Construction (9 temporary roads)	3.5 miles
Reconstruction	1.5 miles

*Under Alternative 4a, 670 acres would be underburned

f. Alternative 5

Alternative 5 is described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-27 through 2-29. Alternative 5 was developed in response to the issue of activities within the North Lochsa Roadless Area. Only prescribed burning would occur in the North Lochsa Roadless Area, and no permanent or temporary roads would be constructed in the roadless area. Alternative 5 includes about 2,220 acres less of off-site conversion harvest, 945 acres less of regeneration harvest, and 215 acres less of commercial thinning, than Alternative 2.

Alternative 5 would implement management activities on approximately 18,695 acres (15 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 49 MMBF. Table ROD-7 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 5.

I have decided to implement Alternative 5, with the modifications described in Section III, because these selected actions respond the best to the purpose and need for action as well as public concerns that have been raised regarding old growth, lynx habitat, and management activities in roadless areas. The environmental analysis in the DSEIS does not indicate that adverse environmental effects would result from timber harvest in roadless areas. However, policies and direction regarding management activities in roadless areas are continuing to evolve, so I have decided not to implement timber harvest activities in inventoried roadless areas as part of this decision at the present time.

Table ROD-7: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 5

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	5,485 acres
Underburn	7,045 acres
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,105 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	0 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,305 acres
Salvage	465 acres
Precommercial Thin	1,290 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	0 miles
Temporary Road Construction (9 temporary roads)	3.5 miles
Reconstruction	1.5 miles

g. Alternative 6 (Environmentally Preferable Alternative)

Alternative 6 is described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-29 through 2-33. Alternative 6 was developed to respond to the issues of harvest in old growth and precommercial thinning in lynx habitat. Alternative 6 includes an additional 170 acres of mixed severity burning and 135 acres of underburning. Alternative 6 includes about 325 acres less of regeneration harvest, 485 acres less of commercial thinning, and 150 acres less of salvage than Alternative 2. Most of the units that were dropped were in old growth. One precommercial thinning unit that was located in lynx habitat was dropped.

Alternative 6 would implement management activities on approximately 21,120 acres (17 percent of the land in the Decision Area). Management actions would include at least five timber sales that would produce a total of about 66 MMBF. Table ROD-8 summarizes the management actions for Alternative 6.

I have indicated Alternative 6 as the "environmentally preferable alternative" because it would address the need for management actions across a large area, while at the same time responding to concerns about old growth and lynx habitat. However, at the current time, it is also important to consider public concerns about roadless areas. Management policies and Forest Service direction concerning this planning issue are still evolving at this time. For these reasons, I have chosen Alternative 5 Modified rather than Alternative 6.

Table ROD-8: Summary of Specific Features for Alternative 6

Action	Acreage
Prescribed Fire	
Mixed Severity Burn	5,655 acres
Underburn	7,180 acres
Timber Harvest	
Regeneration Harvest	2,720 acres
Off-Site Conversion (Clearcut)	2,220 acres
Intermediate Harvest	
Commercial Thin	2,035 acres
Salvage	315 acres
Precommercial Thin	995 acres
Roads	
Permanent Road Construction	0 miles
Temporary Road Construction (8 temporary roads)	3.2 miles
Reconstruction	13 miles

h. Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

The ID team considered several alternatives that were not analyzed in detail. The team evaluated each alternative to determine if it: (1) met the purpose and need and (2) addressed the significant issues (40 CFR 1501.2(c) and FSH 1909.15 section 12.3(c)). The ID team also considered other factors, such as: (1) whether or not the alternative was economically and technologically feasible, and (2) whether the alternative was consistent with the Forest Plan and other laws and regulations.

Timber Harvest in Fish and Hungery Creek Drainages: This alternative would respond to the purpose and need and to a significant issue. It was not considered in detail because it was not consistent with the 1993 Stipulation Agreement. Alternative 4 indirectly addresses this issue because it does not preclude future timber harvest options. Alternative 4 would not burn merchantable timber within this area.

Timber harvest within the Fish and Hungery Creek drainages would not be consistent with the 1993 Stipulation Agreement between the Forest Service and the Wilderness Society et al. In that settlement, the Forest Service agreed not to approve any timber sale or road construction project decisions within the area covered by proposed wilderness legislation (HR 1570) until the Forest Plan is revised. Timber harvest may be considered near Mex Mountain in the southwest quarter of the Fish Creek drainage because that area is outside of the proposed wilderness boundary (HR 1570).

In addition, Hungery Creek is eligible for "Wild" classification under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Clearwater Forest Plan p. II-38 states that no timber harvest is allowed in potential wild river reaches. Since this is the case for most of the Fish Creek drainage and all of the Hungery Creek drainage, it is not feasible to pursue a timber harvest proposal in this area until the Forest Plan is revised.

Precommercial Thinning within Fish Creek, Hungery Creek, and Face drainages: Approximately 3,500 acres of stands having more than 1,000 trees per acre that are less than 7" diameter at breast height (DBH) were originally proposed for thinning. They would have been thinned back to 400-500 trees per acre, using chainsaws or natural prescribed fire treatment methods. Another 710 acres of overstocked stands containing excess shade tolerant species, such as grand fir, cedar, subalpine fir, and mountain hemlock, would have been thinned to increase the percentage of shade intolerant species, such as Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, white pine, larch, and lodgepole pine. All of these stands lack reasonable access. It would be economically infeasible to use chainsaws, and prescribed burning would be impractical as well because of the limited burning season, so the ID team eliminated them from further consideration.

This alternative would respond to the purpose and need, but would not respond to significant issues very well. As noted above, it would be infeasible to implement.

Reforestation of Shrubfields: About 5,300 acres of shrubfields in the project area are poorly stocked with conifers. The ID team considered treating these areas with a mechanical slash buster followed by tree planting. However, monitoring has demonstrated that a recent project of this kind in the Middle Butte Area was ineffective and very costly. If more effective, cheaper reforestation techniques become available in the future, this type of treatment for understocked shrubfield areas could be evaluated in another environmental analysis at that time.

This alternative is consistent with the purpose and need. However, based on past experience, successful implementation would be unlikely with current technology and site conditions. Shrubfield restoration was not a significant issue. Therefore, this alternative was dropped from detailed consideration.

Physical/Mechanical and Biological Control of Noxious Weeds without Herbicides:

This alternative would not respond to the purpose and need for action, and would not address a significant issue, other than passive versus active management. The use of mechanical and biological controls alone would not contain, control or eradicate noxious weed species. Therefore, this alternative was not analyzed in detail.

The effectiveness of cultural or manual treatments would depend in large part on the biology of the weed species, and the size of the infestation. Mowing can effectively reduce the seed production of many species such as spotted knapweed and leafy spurge. However, treated areas must be accessible to equipment. Some species, such as orange hawkweed, do not respond well to cultivation or hand pulling. Disturbing the underground rhizomes of these plants causes them to spread. No biological control exists for orange hawkweed at this time, so the only alternative to no action is to use herbicides.

Biological control is a slow process, and its efficacy is highly variable (Coombs, et al, 1997). It is a method that can be integrated with other practices to reduce weed populations. Biological control alone cannot be used to solve all weed problems because

biological control agents are not available for some weed species, and biological control will not eradicate a species.

Restoration-Only Alternative: Some commenters requested detailed analysis of an aquatic "restoration-only" alternative. However, an alternative of this kind would not meet the purpose and need to restore ecological structure, function, processes and composition for both vegetation and aquatics.

All of the action alternatives are considered to be restoration alternatives. The proposed action and alternatives were designed to treat all of the ecosystem needs, including vegetative needs. Considering the effects of large wildfires fires that burned in the early 1900's, it is prudent to remove some biomass from the project area to reduce the intensities of fires that are likely to occur here in the future. Fire intensities in the 1910 and 1930 fires significantly affected water quality by triggering debris torrents, removing streamside shade, and removing future woody debris. There is a need to reduce biomass and fuel accumulations, and to reintroduce fire into the ecosystem. Management actions that do not accomplish these things would not meet the purpose and need to restore aquatic ecosystems.

VIII. Consistency with the Clearwater Forest Plan

The Clearwater Forest Plan provides guidance through its goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, and management area direction. North Lochsa Face consists of Management Areas A4, A6, A7, C3, C4, C6, C8S, E1, M1, and US, with inclusions of Management Area M2 in all areas. I have evaluated the selected alternative relative to Forest Plan goals, objectives, and standards, and have determined that it meets management direction for all resources, including the following:

a. Aquatics Forest Plan Standards

Standard 8A: Maintain the integrity and equilibrium of all stream systems in the forest.

Channel stability will be maintained in all project area streams. Using the WATBAL sediment model, Apgar Creek has been shown to exceed geomorphic threshold under Alternative 3A. However, the Apgar watershed ($1.63 mi^2$) is below the optimum size recommended for best results with the model (Patten 1989, Personal Communication). Using peak flow data generated by WATBAL, stream survey channel stability data (Watershed Report pp 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20,) and channel type sensitivity tables (Rosgen 1996), it was determined that the risk to channel stability was low, and would be adequately protected through implementation of full PACFISH buffers, and other project design features.

Standard 8B: Manage water quality and stream conditions to assure that National Forest management activities do not cause permanent or long term damage to existing or specified beneficial uses.

Because the selected alternatives are not expected to affect channel morphology, sediment levels, stream flow regime, riparian conditions, or temperature, Forest management will not cause permanent or long term damage to any existing beneficial uses.

Standard 8C: Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) to project activities to ensure water quality standards are met or exceeded (this also addresses Standard 8K).

Design Criteria/BMP's and their effectiveness are discussed in Appendix B of the DSEIS. BMP's will be applied before, during, or after management activities to reduce or eliminate the introduction of pollutants into receiving waters.

Standard 8D: Manage all waters in the Forest under a basic standard.

The selected alternative will maintain the stability, equilibrium, and function (physical and biological) of all tributary streams as they relate to the beneficial uses of local, downstream, and parent streams. This standard also requires that individual projects identify the beneficial uses and the criteria necessary to protect them (DSEIS Page 3-180).

Standard 8E: Manage all watershed systems in the Forest that are considered important for the fishery resource...

In addition to those streams listed in Forest Plan Appendix K, Apgar and Rye Patch Creeks are to be managed as "high fish" streams. Apgar and Rye Patch Creeks, due to their small size (1.63 mi^2, 2.11 mi^2, respectively), are estimated by WATBAL to have geomorphic thresholds of 11% and 38% over baseline. The Forest Hydrologist determined that these values will be used as the standard for maximum sediment increase in these watersheds.

Standard 8F: Monitor, analyze, and evaluate water quality within the critical reaches of specified streams, which are generally third or fourth order streams with watersheds ranging from 4 to 40 square miles.

A list of specific stream systems and their standards is in Appendix K, Section C of the Forest Plan. Streams without Forest Plan Standards (Apgar and Rye Patch), were discussed under Standard 8E, above. Selected water monitoring activities are discussed on Pages ROD-7 through ROD-9 of this Record of Decision and are also included on Pages are described in the DSEIS on Pages 2-12 through 2-14.

Standard 8G: Design, schedule, and implement management practices at the project level that:

- Will maintain water quality and stream conditions that are not likely to cause sustained damage to the biological potential of fish habitat.

- Will not reduce fish habitat productivity in the short term below the assigned standards.

- Will maintain water quality in a condition that is not likely to inhibit recovery of the fish habitat for more than the stated duration; and

- Will require cumulative effects feasibility analysis of projects that involve significant vegetation removal, prior to including them on implementation schedules, to ensure that the project, considered with other activities, will not increase water yields or sediment beyond acceptable limits. Also require that this analysis identify any opportunities for mitigating adverse effects on water-related beneficial uses, including capital investments for fish habitat or watershed improvement.

The analysis indicates that there will be no adverse effects on channel morphology, sediment levels, stream flow, stream temperature, or riparian areas; therefore, there will be no adverse effects on fish habitat.

In addition, activities within management area M2 must meet the following standards (Forest Plan, III-70):

> 4.a. (2) Maintain an overmature component for dependent wildlife species and for large woody debris recruitment as necessary for stream stability and for fish habitat.
>
> 4.a. (3) Maintain the buffering function of organic debris and vegetative cover such that landslides, potential water yields, and sediment delivery from upslope management activities are moderated.

Management area M2 includes the area within 100 feet from perennial streams. This area is included in the PACFISH riparian habitat conservation area (RHCA), which was specifically designed to protect stream stability and fish habitat.

b. PACFISH

This is the interim strategy for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California. The selected alternative will implement default PACFISH riparian habitat conservation areas and comply with the Clearwater Forest Plan standards and guidelines, as amended by the PACFISH Decision Notice.

c. Wild and Scenic River Eligibility

Lower Fish Creek and Hungery Creek are identified as eligible for recreation or wild river status, respectively. The highest value for both is fish. Because fish habitat will be maintained in these streams, and because activities are in compliance with the standards given in Forest Plan Amendment 2, this project will not affect the eligibility status of these two streams.

d. Old Growth Habitat

Approximately 11,700 acres of coniferous forest stands within North Lochsa Face are considered to be old growth. Table ROD-9 identifies by old growth analysis area the approximate acreage and percentage of old growth within each old growth analysis area. The Forest Plan standard is 5% old growth within each old growth analysis area.

Table ROD-9: Old Growth Acreages and Percentages By Old Growth Analysis Area

Old Growth Analysis Area	Analysis Area Acres	Total Old Growth	% Old Growth
Upper Hungery Creek	11,300	225	2
Lower Hungery Creek	11,600	190	2
Willow Creek	11,200	15	0
Black Canyon Face	9,100	0	0
Lower Fish Creek	11,700	250	2
Upper Fish Creek	10,100	1,260	12
West Canyon	10,400	3,040	29
Canyon/Glade	10,200	2,880	28
Deadman	11,900	1,610	14
Bimerick Creek	7,700	375	5
East Pete King	9,100	1,050	10
West Pete King	12,400	950	8
Totals	**127,000 ac**	**11,700 ac**	**9.2%**

The low representation of old growth in the first five listed old growth analysis areas, where no old growth will be treated, is the result of the large wildfires that repeatedly burned these areas during the early part of the century. At least 5% of each of those OGAUs has been identified as replacement old growth, selecting the older stands in larger patches. The list of stands designated as old growth replacement is in the project file.

The selected actions do not include timber harvest in old growth. The selected actions will retain at least 5% old growth where it currently exists, and will meet the 10% forest-wide standard as shown in the current Forest-wide Old Growth Monitoring Report.

e. Fire Management

I have decided to include a site-specific amendment to the Clearwater Forest Plan. Currently, the Forest Plan, Appendix D, Table D-1, designates a specific, maximum number of acres for wildfires. The purpose of this amendment, Amendment No. 20, is to change the target maximum burned acres from wildfire to "unscheduled." Wildfire management decisions will be based on site-specific assessments intended to minimize suppression costs and resource damages while considering public and firefighter safety. This cost plus loss analysis will determine the appropriate suppression forces and tactics to be used for individual wildfires.

This amendment will apply only to management areas A4, A6, A7, C3, C4, C6, and C8S within the North Lochsa Face analysis area. This amendment will change Clearwater Forest Plan, Appendix D (Fire Management Direction), Table D-1, Column 7 (maximum burned acres from wildfire). The current plan has established maximum burned acres from wildfire set to management area designation. In some cases, suppression strategies dictated by these limitations would be in conflict with the Forest Service Fire Suppression Manual objective of safely suppressing wildfires at minimum cost. Manual direction is to initiate initial suppression action that provides for the most reasonable probability of minimizing fire suppression cost and resource damage consistent with probable fire behavior, resource and environmental impacts, safety, and smoke management considerations. In order to meet manual direction and objectives, **the proposed amendment would change the maximum burned acres in column 7, Table D-1 to "unscheduled" for all Management Areas within the North Lochsa Face Analysis area except E1 and M1.**

The need for this site-specific adjustment was identified in the North Lochsa Face DSEIS conducted on the Lochsa Ranger District (see Chapter One, Purpose and Need for Action). Forest Service policy permits Forest Plan amendments resulting from analyses conducted during Forest Plan implementation [36 CFR 219.10(f) and FSM 1922.5]. Changes as a result of this amendment are not significant, based on consideration of the following four factors:

- **Goals, Objectives and Outputs:** Adoption of this amendment will not significantly change the forest-wide environmental impacts disclosed in the Clearwater National Forest Plan EIS. I have determined the proposed changes are not significant, since they are minor adjustments resulting from site-specific analyses, and will not alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.

- **Location and Size:** This amendment is applicable to management areas A4, A6, A7, C3, C4, C6, C8S, only within the North Lochsa Face Analysis Area.

- **Management Prescription:** This amendment does not change the management prescription or anticipated goods and services to be produced. This change is procedural, not substantive.

- **Timing:** This amendment will be implemented concurrently with the vegetation management decision.

f. Consistency with the Forest Plan Lawsuit Settlement

I have reviewed the September 13, 1993, settlement agreement between The Wilderness Society et al., and the Forest Service. I find that the North Lochsa Face project:

- Has verified the old growth status of all stands proposed for harvest or temporary road construction. The settlement agreement stipulates that any harvest or road

building in old growth stands greater than 100 acres be analyzed in an EIS. The North Lochsa Face FEIS, DSEIS and FSEIS fulfill that agreement.

- Will result in a reduction in sediment produced and delivered to analysis area streams (no measurable increase in sediment production). The beneficial effects of road obliteration; obliteration of temporary roads constructed for the project; the removal of 657 tons of sediment from traps in Walde and Pete King Creeks; and the planting of riparian areas in Fish and Pete King Creeks will improve water quality beyond what is required to meet the terms of the settlement agreement.

- All the components of the selected actions have been considered, including the temporary roads, harvest, burning, weed treatments, road obliteration, thinning, etc., in order to make the determination of "No Measurable Increase" in sediment, where streams currently exceed the sediment standard.

- Will not harvest timber or construct roads in any lands identified in proposed Idaho Wilderness Bill HR 1570.

- Will not alone or in combination with other anticipated timber sales cause the Forest to exceed the annual 80 MMBF schedule for any of the Fiscal Years (FYs 2003 - 2007) affected by this project's timber sales.

IX. Findings Required by Other Laws and Policies

a. Scientific Findings of the Interior Columbia River Basin

An analysis of the status of ecosystems within the Interior Columbia River Basin was completed in November 1996. The assessment determined that the primary ecological risks to this area were (1) cold forest types are sensitive to soil disturbance; (2) fire severity in lower elevations and dry forest types; (3) aquatic integrity induced by low forest integrity in dry and moist forest types. The primary opportunities to address risks to integrity include reduction of fire threat in lower elevations and manage road densities, and reduction of fire severity through restoration practices (Status of the Interior Columbia Basin Summary of Scientific Findings PNW-GTR-385, p. 127).

The proposed action is designed to reduce fire severity by reducing the amount of biomass in the forest and manage road densities by decommissioning unneeded roads that are causing sediment.

b. Natural Resource Agenda (USDA, 1998)

This national policy states that to accomplish the goal of restoring and maintaining healthy watersheds, the Forest Service will implement a nine-point strategy, including "restore degraded ecosystems and attain desirable plant conditions". It also identifies seven areas of concern in regard to forest health issues to be addressed, including fuel buildups and disturbance patterns such as insect and disease outbreaks.

The proposed action is designed to respond to forest health and ecological conditions through restoration of vegetative conditions.

The Natural Resource agenda states "Forest Service policy is to restore and maintain healthy watersheds for use by current and future generations." In support of this policy, the Agenda states that the Forest Service will (1) restore degraded ecosystems; (2) reconstruct, relocate, and decommission roads to help restore degraded watersheds; (3) conserve and recover threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and their habitats.

The proposed action is designed to restore and maintain healthy watersheds through road decommissioning, removal of sediment traps, instream fish habitat improvement projects and riparian area planting. The action would assist in the conservation and recovery of fish species by reducing the risk of catastrophic fire and reducing sediment delivered to streams.

c. National Fire Plan (USDA, 2000)

In 1999, the General Accounting Office determined that a cohesive strategy was needed to address catastrophic wildfire threats (GAO/RCED 99-65). The report stated that "Tree stands on national forests of the interior West have grown much denser in recent decades, have undergone shifts in species composition, and have experienced increases in some insect and disease infestations. These indicators, often considered indicators of poor health, jeopardize the ability of these forests to sustain wildlife habitat as well as timber production. In addition, they pose a more immediate problem-the threat of catastrophic wildfires." The Forest Service prepared a response to the GAO report, titled "Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems, A Cohesive Strategy". The strategy outlines approaches to protect communities and maintain land health in fire-adapted ecosystems. It states that "In fire-adapted ecosystems, some measure of fire use – at the appropriate intensity, frequency, and time of year – must be included in management strategies intended to protect and sustain watersheds, species, and other natural resources over the long term

Although the basis for this project occurred prior to the strategy, the project meets the purpose of the strategy through the development of actions designed to restore resilient ecosystems that will sustain the resources through time.

d. Clean Air Act

The Clean Air Act requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify air pollutants with adverse effects on public health and welfare, establishing primary and secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for each identified pollutant. Each state is required to develop a plan for maintaining air quality within these standards. Smoke is the primary pollutant of concern for the Clearwater National Forest. The Forest abides by the North Idaho Smoke Management Memorandum of Agreement, and participates in the North Idaho Airshed Group, comprised of the major outdoor burning practitioners in North Idaho. This agreement established procedures to regulate the amount of smoke produced by prescribed fire and identifies airsheds for management

purposes. The North Idaho Airshed Group uses fuels and weather information to analyze smoke impacts to local communities and impose burning restrictions when warranted.

The Clean Air Act also includes a process for designation of areas (Class I, II, or III) for air quality management. Class I areas are the "cleanest" areas and get special visibility protection, including a limit in the allowable increase in pollutants and particulate concentrations. Class I areas on the Clearwater National Forest are in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Class II areas are areas of good air quality with no air quality restrictions. The North Lochsa Face analysis area is designated as Class II. The NAAQS pollutant of concern in the North Lochsa Face analysis area is particulate matter and its effects on visibility.

Visibility is a concern in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, where particulate matter standards are often not met during the summer and fall burning seasons. Because of its location relative to the prevailing winds, prescribed burning or wildfires in the North Lochsa Face project area could contribute to air quality degradation in the Bitterroot Valley.

The burning proposed in the North Lochsa Face analysis area is intended to achieve the purpose and need for action by altering tree density and composition and reducing woody fuel loads and fuel ladders while maintaining air quality standards.

e. Roadless Policy (USDA, 2001)

In January 2001, the Forest Service issued a final rule and record of decision pertaining to prohibitions on road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting in inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands (Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 9, pp. 3244-3273). That decision prohibited road construction, road reconstruction and or timber cutting, sale or removal in inventoried roadless areas except under certain circumstances. On May 10, 2001 the District Court of Idaho issued a preliminary injunction against implementation of the roadless rule. Due to the uncertainty of the litigation, the Chief of the Forest Service, Dale Bosworth, issued a letter June 7, 2001 which described the delegation of authority for issuing decisions regarding timber harvest and road construction in roadless areas. On July 27, 2001, Interim Directives 2400-2001-3 and 7710-2001-2 were issued, implementing the Chief's June 7 letter.

The Chief's June 7, 2001 letter stated:

> "Effective immediately, I am reserving to myself, the decision authority for timber harvest and road construction in inventoried roadless areas…. I will follow this letter with an Interim Directive…The Interim Directive will include exceptions similar in scope to those provided in 36 CFR 294.12 and 26 CFR 294.13."

A lower line officer may issue decisions for timber harvest and road construction if they are consistent with the exceptions outlined in 36 CFR 294.12 and 26 CFR 294.13.

The circumstances where timber harvest is allowed include:

1) The cutting, sale, or removal of generally small diameter timber is needed for one of the following purposes and will maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics as defined in 294.11.

   i) To improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat; or

   ii) To maintain or restore characteristics of ecosystem composition, and structure, such as to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects, within the range of variability that would be expected to occur under natural disturbance regimes of the current climatic period.

Interim Directive 2400-2001-3, 2404.11 "...adds new paragraph 4 that reserves to the Chief the authority to approve certain proposed timber harvests in inventories roadless areas as defined in FSM 7712.16a, until revision of a land and resource management plan."

Interim Directive 2400-2001-3, 2404.15 "... adds a new paragraph 13 that requires Regional Forester review and agreement on the purpose and need for timber harvests in roadless areas and assigns to Regional Foresters the responsibility to screen proposed timber harvests in inventoried roadless areas to determine those that should be recommended to the Chief for approval."

Interim Directive 2400-2001-3, 2404.15 delegates the authority to approve timber harvest in roadless areas to the Regional Foresters if the following circumstances exist:

a. The timber is generally small-diameter material and the removal of timber is needed for one of the following purposes:

   (1) To improve habitat for listed or proposed threatened and endangered species, or for sensitive species (FSM 2670), or

   (2) To maintain or restore the desirable characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, for example, to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects.

b. The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is incidental to the implementation of a management activity and not otherwise prohibited under the land and resource management plan.

c. The cutting, sale, or removal of timber is needed and appropriate for personal or administrative use as provided for in 36 CFR Part 223.

d. The harvest is in a portion of an inventoried roadless area where construction of a classified road and subsequent timber harvest have previously taken place, and the roadless area characteristics have been substantially altered by those activities.

Interim Directive 7710-2001-2, 7710.4 "...adds a new paragraph that reserves to the Chief the authority to approve certain proposed road construction or reconstruction projects in

inventoried roadless areas until revision of a land and resource management plan or the adoption of a plan amendment that has considered the protection or other management of inventoried roadless areas as defined in FSM 7712.16a. Provides that the Chief may designate other Washington Office officials to serve as Responsible Official for decisions that are to be made at the Chief's level."

Interim Directive 7710-2001-2, 7710.42 "...Revises paragraph 3 to be consistent with the Chief's reservation of authority." In new paragraph 3.a, the Regional Forester's authority to serve as Responsible Official on a road construction/reconstruction project in contiguous unroaded areas is retained. In a new paragraph 3.b, the Regional Forester's authority as Responsible Official is limited to those Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) for road construction or reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas authorized by FSM 7712.16b, paragraph 2, and FSM 7712.16d.

- Adds a new paragraph 7 assigning to Regional Foresters the responsibility to review and determine if proposed road construction or reconstruction projects in inventoried roadless areas, that are not within the Regional Forester's decision authority should be forwarded to the Chief for approval.

- Also adds a new paragraph 8 assigning the Regional Forester the responsibility of reviewing and agreeing to the purpose and need statements for any Notice of Intent to prepare a draft EIS that considers road construction or reconstruction in inventoried roadless areas.

Interim Directive 7710-2001-2, 7712.16a "...Removes an incorrect citation to FSM 7705 from the definition of inventoried roadless areas."

Interim Directive 7710-2001-2, 7712.16b "...Revised paragraph 1a through 1c to add a reference to FSM 7712.16d in the introductory phrase and to add references to the Responsible Official and the Chief to be consistent with changes in delegated authority in this ID."

- Adds a new paragraph 4 directing that road construction or reconstruction projects which meet compelling needs other than those specifically identified and described as examples in FSM 7712.16b, paragraph 2, may only be approved by the Chief.

Interim Directive 1920-2001-1, dated December 14, 2001, further implemented the Chief's 1230/1920 letter of June 7, 2001 by relocating ID's 2400-2001-2 and 7710-2001-2 to FSM 1920, because the allocation of roadless areas is a planning function, not a function of engineering or transportation analysis.

In a memo dated September 13, 2002, Region One Regional Forester Bradley E. Powell concurred with the purpose and need for action, and with my determination that the action alternatives meet the exception category in Interim Directive 1920-2001-2 (FSM 1925.04a.2) which states that the timber to be harvested is generally small diameter, and that removal of the timber is needed to maintain or restore desirable characteristics of

ecosystem composition and structure as required. Therefore, this decision does not need to be forwarded to the Chief's office for approval.

The selected actions will not harvest timber or build roads within an inventoried roadless area.

The North Lochsa Landscape Assessment covered many aspects of roads analysis for the project area, as described in *Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions About Management the National Forest Transportation System* (USDA Forest Service, Miscellaneous Report FS-643, August 1999). A roads analysis specific to this project has been completed.

f. Executive Order on Environmental Justice

Executive Order (EO) 12898, published in the Federal Register on February 16, 1994, was designed to focus Federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions in minority and low-income communities, with the goal of achieving environmental justice. It was also intended to promote nondiscrimination in Federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment. It provided minority and low-income communities access to public information on, and opportunities for participation in, matters related to human health or the environment.

EO 12898 requires Federal agencies to ensure that all Federal programs that affect the environment or human health do not use criteria, methods, or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Each Federal agency is required to analyze the environmental effects of Federal actions, including effects on human health, economics and social effects, and effects on low-income or minority communities, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Each Federal agency is also required to ensure that the public has adequate access to public information related to human health or environmental planning, regulations, and enforcement.

The North Lochsa Face project area lies within traditional lands of the Nez Perce Tribe. This area is also included within Idaho County, which has a disproportionately high rate of unemployment and low income compared to other counties in the State of Idaho.

The selected actions would have no disproportionate effects on low-income or minority communities in the vicinity of the project area and would, in fact, create jobs. The selected actions will improve big game and aquatic habitat, thereby improving hunting and fishing opportunities.

g. National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) requires that Federal Agencies with direct or indirect jurisdiction over Federal, federally assisted, or federally licensed undertakings to consider the effects of their proposed actions on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The detailed formal process for meeting this requirement is found in Title 36 Chapter 800 of the Code of Federal Regulations

(36CFR800). This process includes requirements for identification and evaluation of historic properties, assessment and resolution of effects, consultation with the Advisory Council, State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal governments and others, and coordination with NEPA.

The Clearwater National Forest is using a process called "phased identification and evaluation" to meet the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act. This process is outlined in Title 36, Chapter 800.4(b)(2) of the Code of Federal Regulations, and uses a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the Clearwater National Forest, Nez Perce National Historical Park, and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office and filed with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In using this approach, the Clearwater National Forest will conduct heritage resource surveys, prescribe mitigation measures to avoid effects, or cancel individual treatment areas in the case of effects that cannot be mitigated, and complete consultation with the Idaho SHPO, Nez Perce Tribe, and National Park Service prior to approving implementation of individual projects covered under this Record of Decision.

The requirements and design criteria agreed to in this MOA are listed on pages 3-328 through 3-330 of the North Lochsa Face Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Execution of this MOA by the Clearwater National Forest, Idaho SHPO and other parties evidences that the Forest Service has met the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act, and that the project will have no effect on historic properties outside of the boundaries of the Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark, and will have no adverse effect to historic properties within the Lolo Trail NHL.

X. Appeal Opportunities and Implementation

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations (36 CFR Part 215). A written Notice of Appeal must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date of the legal notice published in the Lewiston, Idaho *Lewiston Morning Tribune* for this decision. Send appeals to:

USDA Forest Service, Northern Region
Attention: Appeals Deciding Officer (RFO)
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, Montana 59807

Appeals must meet the requirements of 36 CFR 215.4. Detailed records of the environmental analysis are available for public review at the Kamiah Ranger Station, Rt. 2 Box 191, Kamiah, ID 83536, telephone (208) 935-2513.

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 calendar days after the date of the last appeal disposition.

CONTACT PERSON: Additional information concerning this decision and the FSEIS may be obtained by contacting Cynthia Lane, Lochsa District Ranger, at (208) 926-4275, or Lois Foster, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, at the Kamiah Ranger Station (208) 935-4258.

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LARRY J. DAWSON **Date**
Forest Supervisor