

DECISION MEMO
USDA FOREST SERVICE
SOUTH PASS SALE AREA IMPROVEMENT AND FUELS REDUCTION
Washakie Ranger District of the Shoshone *National Forest*
Fremont County, Wyoming

DECISION

I have decided to remove the dwarf mistletoe and comandra rust infected overstory trees within the cutting units of the 1976 South Pass Timber Sale. The felled trees will be made available to personal use firewood cutters using the existing transportation system.

The project will be implemented based on the Shoshone National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan vegetative management goals. Specifically, these goals are designed to manage vegetation types outside of wilderness to provide multiple benefits commensurate with land capability and resource demand and to improve the health and vigor of vegetation types outside of wilderness (Forest Plan/III-6). In addition, the timber goals for this area include (Forest Plan/III-8);

- 1.) Implement an integrated pest management program to prevent and control insect infestation and disease.
- 2.) Reduce the accumulation of fuels.

Based on these Forest Plan goals, I have decided to implement this project using the following design criteria.

Project Design Criteria Include:

- 1) Only existing roads will be used for access to implement the project.
- 2) Remove disease infected overstory trees to prevent the further spread of dwarf mistletoe and comandra rust into the surrounding 20 year old understory regeneration (1976 South Pass harvest units).
- 3) Broadcast and jackpot burn slash created through overstory removals to reduce fuel accumulations and stimulate aspen sprouting.
- 4) Reduce fuel accumulations through out the sale area.
- 5) Provide non commercial wood products to the local communities (Lander, Riverton, Farson and Rock Springs) through designated personal use fuelwood sites.

Category of the Proposed Action

The proposed action falls under Category Number 6 , in section 31.2 of the *Forest Service Handbook 1909.15 - Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook* .

"Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction."

Finding of No Extraordinary Circumstances

Extraordinary circumstances include, but are not limited to, the presence of steep slopes or highly erosive soils; threatened and endangered species or their critical habitat; flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds; Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or National Recreation Areas; inventoried roadless areas; Research Natural Areas; or Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.

This action does not involve any extraordinary circumstances, as documented by materials in the project file. Therefore, this action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

A Categorical Exclusion Guide and Checklist is attached to the project file for review.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The proposed action was scoped for a 2 month period between November and December 1998, in the Wyoming State Journal, a newspaper of general circulation in the vicinity of the federal and non federal lands (see the attached notice). Adjacent landowners, the Fremont County Commissioners and the Wyoming Congressional Delegation were also notified of the project in November of 1998. There were no issues and concerns identified during scoping.

Scope and Size of Project:

All of the of the comments received were in favor of the project. The state of Wyoming recommended several items to be incorporated in the project. These recommendations are listed under the Additional Project Design Criteria and can also be found in the state's package from the Office of Federal Land Policy dated December 14, 1998 (see project file).

Findings Required By Other Laws

The Forest Plan has been reviewed and a determination made that this decision is consistent with the Forest Plan. The actions in this project comply fully with the goals of the Forest Plan, the Management Area Direction, including that contained under management prescription, 2A-Semiprimitive Motorized Recreation, 2B-Rural and Roaded Natural Recreation, and 7E-Wood Fiber Production, and the Forest-wide standard and guidelines (See Chapter III of the Shoshone Land and Resource Management Plan).

Floodplain, wetlands, prime farm lands, threatened and endangered species, and cultural resource management implications have been considered and these resources will not be adversely affected.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision can be implemented immediately and is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.8 (a) (4). The project will be implemented during the 2,000 field season.

Contact Person

For further information, contact Karl Brauneis, Forester, by telephone at (307)-332-5460 or write to the Washakie Ranger District, 333 East Main, Lander, WY 82520.

/s/ Burns Davison

BURNS DAVISON

Washakie District Ranger

March 24, 2000

Date