

# Proposed Action

## Washakie Salvage Treatment Project

The Pinedale Ranger District is proposing to harvest timber in the vicinity of Washakie Park. The area is located in Township 41 North, Range 110 West, Sections 13, 14, 23, and 24 approximately 48 miles north of Pinedale, Wyoming (see attached map). The vegetation within the proposed area is composed primarily of mature Lodgepole pine with some mature Engelmann spruce and Subalpine fir scattered throughout.

### **Purpose and Need for Action:**

The proposed treatment area is within the boundary of the 22,569 acre Purdy wildfire which started in July of 2006 and burned through September of that year.

The primary purpose of the project is to harvest the dead and dying trees to recover the existing economic value. The primary need for the proposed action is to recover product utility and values in a timely manner; prior to weather effects, decay, and insect damage that rapidly reduces or eliminates the utility of the killed trees. Burned or dead lodgepole pine trees may lose their value as a saw-log as quickly as two years following mortality.

### **Proposed Action:**

The Pinedale Ranger District is proposing commercial timber harvest to remove dead and/or dying trees of merchantable size. Areas devoid of most trees on more than ½ an acre would be regenerated to lodgepole pine seedlings. The regeneration would occur either naturally or via planting. The proposed action would occur on approximately 250 acres of National Forest land.

The areas proposed for treatment are in Forest Plan Desired Future Condition (DFC) DFC 10. The Forest Plan describes DFC 10 as “*an area managed to allow for some resource development and roads while having no adverse and some beneficial effects on wildlife*”. The management emphasis is to provide long-term and short-term habitat to meet the needs of wildlife managed in balance with timber harvest, grazing, and minerals development. All surface-disturbing activities are designed to have no effect or beneficial effects on wildlife.

### **Washakie Salvage Treatment:**

- ***This harvest area is approximately 250 acres. The Bridger-Teton Forest Land and Resource Management Plan establishes a maximum created opening size of 40 acres, but makes exceptions for catastrophic events such as wildfire, insect or disease attack.*** The trees selected for harvest would be trees of merchantable size (greater than 7 inches in diameter) that were blackened immediately by the fire and trees that were under-burned and still are dying as a result of the fire.. The specific vegetation treatment would be to

remove all dead and/or dying trees, including those trees which appear green but are slowly dying because of the fire or are infested with mountain pine beetles at implementation. Trees that will die relatively soon (within 3 years) from effects of fire have the following characteristics and would be harvested. (Weatherby, et.al. 2001).

Species	Crown Scorch	Root and Bole Char
Lodgepole pine	>25%	>35%
Englemann Spruce	>70%	>40%
Subalpine Fir	>10%	>25%

Most of the slash created by timber harvest would be lopped and scattered. The remainder of the slash would be machine piled and burned. Woody debris would be left on the ground at a rate of 10 to 15 tons per acre for erosion control and future soil productivity. This would also aid in seed dispersal for natural regeneration and create micro sites for these seedlings. The slash piles will be burned when they have cured and snow is on the ground. All skid trails and landings would be ripped through the depth of soil compaction to reduce compaction, improve seedbed and water infiltration, and to reduce erosion.

The vegetation treatment would involve the use of the existing roads in the area. All roads would remain closed to public use during and after the project, this would result in no change to current travel plan management. A temporary road of up to ½ mile may be needed to access the timber. After use, this road would be returned to natural condition.

Invasive plant species would be treated within the sale area if populations occur after the timber harvest activities.

### **Literature Cited**

Weatherby, Julie C., R.A. Progar, Philip J. Mocettini Jr., 2001. Evaluation of Tree Survival on the Payette National Forest. 1995-1999. USDA Forest Service. Intermountain Region. Ogden, Utah. FHP-rpt-01-01. 29 Pages.