

Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project

Heritage Report

Prepared by:

Justin Moschelle
Archaeologist

for:

Lolo National Forest

September 17, 2008

Introduction

A heritage resource analysis was conducted for the Jocko Lakes Fire Salvage Project. The analysis was undertaken to determine if cultural or heritage properties were present in the Area of Potential (APE) effect, and if such properties would be affected by project actions. A set of criteria were assembled to off-set potential adverse effects and to promote potential beneficial effects to heritage resources by either removing potentially hazardous fuels or through resource avoidance. This analysis is conducted for consideration in determining whether or not to prepare and Environmental Impact Statement.

Regulatory Framework

This analysis is in conformance with regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 1966, as amended (P.L. 89-665, 80 Stat.915); the National Environmental Protection Act (1969), Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA), Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (1990: P.L. 101-601), and American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978: P.L. 95-341).

Heritage Resource design features for the Jocko Salvage Project follow the “Programmatic Agreement” and “Interim Protocols”, formally known as the First Amended Regional Programmatic Agreement Among The U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Northern Region Montana State Historic Preservation Officer, And Advisory Council On Historic Preservation Regarding The Process For Compliance With Section 106 Of The National Historic Preservation Act For Undertakings On The National Forests Of The Northern Region (Regional PA), and the Interim Protocol for Non-Intensive Inventory Strategies for Hazardous Fuels and Vegetation Reduction Projects (Interim Protocol). Further direction can be found in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (1986) of The Lolo National Forest, Chapter 3, Section 12.

NHPA and its implementing regulations require Federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on Historic Properties. The term Historic Properties refers to Class I cultural properties that have been listed or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties, 36 CFR 800, outlines the set of procedures established by the NHPA that Federal Agencies follow before implementing an action that may affect Historic Properties. For the purpose of this analysis, any properties currently identified as potentially eligible or unevaluated will be considered for listing with the NRHP.

Forest Service policy (FSM 2361.3) requires that projects with the potential to affect cultural resources be surveyed for cultural resources in order to comply with the above cited laws and regulations.

There are two federally recognized tribes, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, in the Jocko Fire Salvage Project area requiring direct consultation as provided by 36 CFR 800. They were contacted as part of normal section 106 consultations for this project as an interested party.

No comments were received from any interested parties concerning any potential adverse effects to recorded archaeological sites, nor has there been any concern this project may effect areas of spiritual or traditional use.

Methodology for Analysis

Agency and State files were reviewed which included previous heritage inventory reports, site forms, maps, and other data sets. Tribal governments and public scoping was also conducted. These reviews confirm that historic and prehistoric properties, and traditional use areas, exist within the project area. In accordance with the Regulatory Framework cited previously, a heritage resource study of the proposed project was conducted (Jocko Fire Salvage, McLeod, Moschelle, Minetz, 2007).

Affected Environment

Existing Condition

Four known archaeological sites are recorded within the area of potential effect (project area). One of these sites (the Jocko Lakes Historic Trail) is eligible for the National Historic Register. Two other sites located within the APE are considered a contributing element to the Jocko Lakes Historic Trail.

Desired Condition

It is recognized that heritage surveys contribute to our knowledge of past prehistoric and historic events. It is desired to protect prehistoric and historic sites. The above referenced heritage resource laws and regulations are designed to protect sites that are important to our understanding of these past events. The resource laws and regulations also provide for inventory and protection.

Environmental Consequences

Mitigation and Monitoring

For this project, sites within the APE will be flagged and ground disturbing activities avoided. If previously unknown heritage resources are encountered during implementation of the project, activities will be halted and The Lolo National Forest Archeologist will be notified.

Alternative 5 - No Action

Direct Effects

The No Action alternative will not cause any direct environmental consequences to heritage resources, as no activities likely to affect such resources or their attributes will occur.

Indirect Effects

Indirect effects may occur under the No Action alternative as there are known sites in the area that could be affected by timber harvest and ground disturbing activities. The proposed action is designed to mitigate wildfire conditions.

Cumulative Effects

Past wildfires have affected heritage resources by consuming prehistoric and historic structures, features and fabrics. Heritage resources within the identified project area have features and fabric that could be lost from the continued effects of high-intensity wildfire.

Alternative 3

Direct Effects

Known sites will not be affected by project activities in Alternative 3 because the project was designed to restrict ground disturbing activities near known sites. Project specific management plans that provide site protection have been developed (information resides with The Lolo National Forest Archeologist - McLeod 2007).

There is the potential that sites (unanticipated discoveries) do exist that are currently obscured by vegetative cover. If unanticipated discoveries are found then ground disturbing activities will stop until The Lolo National Forest Archeologist can assess the situation.

Indirect Effects

No indirect effects (e.g. erosion) are likely to occur to known heritage resources as a result of this project.

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects area is the Jocko Fire Salvage project area boundary. For context, historical impacts to heritage resources on National Forests in general are considered to assess potential benefits of vegetation treatments.

Since Alternative 3 will have no direct or indirect negative effects on cultural resources, there are no cumulative negative effects from this project.

Forest management practices over the past century, resulting in fuel accumulation, have contributed to the occurrence of intense, stand-replacing wildfire. While many types of cultural resources can survive low-severity fire with little or no damage, high-severity burns can destroy or damage a wide range of cultural sites and artifacts. The 2008 Jocko lakes fire did not destroy the known heritage resources in the project area, rather, the burning of vegetation exposed prehistoric and historic resources previously unknown.

Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction (Heading 2)

This project complies with The Final Environmental Impact Statement for The Lolo National Forest and the Regional Programmatic Agreement with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, as well as the requirements as provided in the Regulatory Framework, above.