DECISION MEMO

Job Creek Fuels Reduction Project

Sawtooth National Recreation Area
Sawtooth National Forest
Custer County, Idaho

Background

The Stanley Basin is currently experiencing an advanced infestation of mountain pine beetle, which is resulting in high levels of mortality throughout the lodgepole pine forest. In many locations, these affected lodgepole pine stands are among or directly adjacent to rural communities and private developments. In other locations, unnaturally dense vegetation, particularly conifer encroachment into montane openings and meadows, is causing natural fuel breaks to disappear from the landscape. Where these conditions exist in proximity to private land and developments they represent a wildfire hazard and risk to public safety and property.

The majority of the project area consists of mature lodgepole pine. These stands are experiencing heavy mortality due to an ongoing mountain pine beetle infestation, which is affecting lodgepole pine trees typically larger than 6 inches in diameter (dbh). This is a natural cycle in lodgepole forests, by which mature stands regenerate. This cycle has historically occurred in this forest type on the Sawtooth NRA countless times, however, many private developments and communities now exist within, adjacent, or in close proximity to these affected forests. This change greatly increases the risk to public and firefighter safety and the threat of wildfire to private land and developments in the wildland urban interface (WUI) of the Job Creek area.

Lack of natural disturbance, especially fire, has had a detrimental affect on montane openings and meadows. These natural fuel breaks are experiencing advanced conifer encroachment which has increased the fuel continuity in close proximity to private lands and developments while causing the loss of natural openings and vegetative diversity. As this condition advances it will increase the wildfire risk to adjacent private lands and developments.

The project occurs in a WUI area as identified by the Custer County Fire Mitigation Plan, 2005. The Homestead Subdivision (in Job Creek) is a specific area of concern and is thought to be vulnerable to significant loss due to a wildfire event. A preliminary risk assessment was completed by Custer County for this mitigation plan. One hazard that was identified for this assessment was "wildfire adjacent to subdivisions within the SNRA boundary". This hazard received "high" rankings in all categories, including *life safety and property damage.*

Decision
It is my decision to authorize the implementation of the Job Creek Fuels Reduction Project. An approved silvicultural prescription is required prior to implementing any commercial vegetation

treatment involving tree cutting for this project. Other project implementation may occur immediately after this document is signed.

Proposed Action

The proposed project encompasses 345 acres located on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, Sawtooth National Forest, within Custer County, approximately 5 miles northwest of Stanley. Primary access is via State Highway 21. The project area is located off Forest Road 642 and lies within the following sections: 25, 26, 35 and 36, T. 11N, R. 12E B.M.. (Refer to Map for treatments and locations.)

The objectives for this project would be achieved with a variety of treatments and methods. The methods include:

- Defensible Space Treatments
- Commercial and Personal Use Timber Sales
- Stewardship Contracts
- Service Contracts
- Forest Service Fire Crews

Mechanical Vegetation Treatments

The following treatments would be accomplished using mechanized ground-based logging equipment. This could include small crawler tractors, skidders, track-hoes, skid-steers, self-loaders and various forwarder- harvester systems. Forwarder-harvest systems can cut or shear trees and carry them to log decks that will be picked up and hauled to designated landings for limbing, topping and loading.

Whole tree skidding (limbs attached) would occur to designated landing locations where trees would be limbed and topped. Small crawler tractors and skidders would skid trees to designated landings. Tree slash (limbs, tops) would be machine piled on site. Areas of heavy surface fuel loading (dead and down trees) may also be piled or skidded to reduce fuel loading, primarily within the defensible space treatment areas. Slash would be burned (most likely in the spring or fall as weather conditions permit) or hauled off site. Small slash piles may remain to provide cover and transitional habitat for small mammals. Coarse woody debris (CDW) and snags would be retained at desired levels to meet resource objectives.

Defensible Space Fuel Breaks

Defensible space treatments would occur within the immediate vicinity of structures and developments such as private residence areas, including outbuildings and improvements. These treatments may extend up to 500 feet out from structures, or private boundary lines, in all directions on Forest land. Studies have shown that the chance of a structure catching fire can be significantly reduced by conducting fuel reduction activities within close proximity of the structure and by changing the physical characteristics of a structure and its surroundings (i.e., moving firewood piles, changing roofing materials, reducing the amount of adjacent vegetation). The objective of defensible space is to reduce the wildfire threat to structures by changing the characteristics of the adjacent vegetation *(Living with*

Fire – A Guide for the Homeowner). Live and dead trees would be removed. Treatments may consist of commercial harvest or hand treatments and would include thinning timbered stands with up to 20 foot spacing between mature trees, pruning low-lying branches up to 8-10 feet in height, removing dead and down trees, removing sapling size trees, and piling and burning slash. In sites with pole size lodgepole pine, small groups of trees would be retained in the 1/10 acre patch size with 50 foot spacing between groupings. This would be done in an effort to minimize blown down after trees have been removed. Activities that aid (or assist) in reducing flammability on structures and houses will be encouraged through public education contacts.

Approximately 33 acres have been identified for defensible space treatments.

Commercial Timber Harvest

These fuel reduction activities would remove insect attacked (trees that show heavy MPB infestation would be targeted[1]), diseased and dead lodgepole pine trees larger than 7 inches in diameter[2]. Studies have shown that fuel treatments can change the behavior of a fire within the fuel-altered zone and lesson the impact of that fire to an area of concern. The following activities may occur on up to 125 acres within the project area. Treatments may include*: 1) Sanitation/Salvage (up to 105 acres)* – These treatments would remove insect attacked and diseased trees and dead trees killed by fire, insects, or disease. *2) Sanitation/Salvage within Hanson Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area (up to 20 acres)* – This treatment would also remove insect attacked and dead trees and would occur near the boundary of the IRA, adjacent to Forest Road 642. This area is within 0.5 miles of the private property boundary and adjacent developments.

Conifer Encroachment in Natural Openings

All sizes of live sizes would be removed; some dead trees may also be removed. This would be accomplished by hand or by using a brush cutter or tree shear mounted on a low-impact tracked or rubber tired machine. Slash would be scattered or piled and burned, most likely in the spring or fall as weather conditions permit. Some tree boles greater than 3 inches in diameter could be left on site as coarse woody debris and some piles could be left on site as cover for small mammals. Approximately 103 acres have been identified for this treatment. These areas are located outside of the Hanson lakes IRA.

Non-mechanized Vegetation Treatments

Forest or contract crews would accomplish the following. Tree slash (limbs, tops) would be hand piled on site. Slash would be burned or small piles may remain where they do not pose a wildfire threat. Burning would most likely occur in the spring or fall as weather conditions permit.

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[1] A successful attack by mountain pine beetle (MPB) may be described as a high density of pitch tubes around the lower 15 feet of the trunk, usually accompanied by boring dust (frass) at the pitch tube entry and along the base of the tree.

[2] The majority of lodgepole pine trees that have been affected by MPB within the project area have a diameter at breast height (dbh) between 7 and 14 inches. Dead or infested lodgepole pine trees that are larger in dbh could be removed for commercial harvest. These larger dbh trees grow in open stand conditions, are fewer in number and often have little commercial value due to the numerous knots in the bole that result from the many low lying branches.

Conifer Encroachment in Natural Openings (including Hanson Lakes IRA)

All sizes of live trees would be removed using chainsaws; some dead trees may also be removed. Trees would be hand felled and scattered or piled and burned. Some tree boles greater than 3 inches in diameter could be left on site as coarse woody debris and some piles could be left on site as cover for small mammals. Slash would be piled and burned; most likely in the spring or fall as weather conditions permit. Approximately 84 acres have been identified for this treatment.

Riparian Conservation Areas

Tree thinning could occur within these areas, and dead and dying (evidence of successful attack by MPB) lodgepole pine trees would be targeted. Trees would be hand felled and tree boles would be left on site as coarse woody debris. Standing live or dead trees may be limbed to 10-15 feet. Treetops (down to 3 inches in dbh) and limbs would be cut and the slash would be piled and burned outside the riparian conservation areas (RCA). Within the RCA of perennial streams, in naturally forested environments, no standing, healthy, green trees, of any size, would be cut.

Defensible Space Fuel Breaks

Where commercial logging is not possible due to access issues and resource concerns, hand-felling treatments would be used to accomplish desired fuel profiles. Trees would be hand felled by Forest or contract crews and slash and boles would be piled and burned.

Other Activities (Including Access Roads)

National Forest System roads and existing non-system roads would be utilized within the project area. Existing routes that are not currently part of the Forest System could be improved as needed to meet standards required for timber hauling, including proper tread and drainage to avoid soil degradation and erosion. Existing non-system roads and two-tracks that are used for commercial timber operation would be obliterated and rehabilitated at the conclusion of the project.

Due to its degraded condition, including severe drainage and soil erosion problems and to allow for safe vehicle travel, Forest System Road 642 would be improved and realigned prior to timber harvest. The proposed realignment is described below. Snowmobile access routes in this area would be maintained.

The beginning section of Forest Road 642 (*MP 0.0 to MP 0.*2) would be realigned through an adjacent and a more suitable upland location. The reroute would travel through the lodgepole moraine towards Highway 21 at the midpoint of the first switchback and a new access point to Highway 21 would be established, away from the wet meadow. The reroute would extend approximately 1/8mile through lodgepole pine upland and allieviate resource issues along the portion of the FR 642 associated with the wet meadow. This reroute would become the system road. The existing portion of FR 642 that extends from the intersection with Stanley Creek Road (FR 455) up to the midpoint of the first switchback (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile) would be removed and rehabilitated. The existing fill from this

portion of FR 642 would be removed and used in constructing the new rerouted section. Along the uphill portion of the switchback (*MP 0.2 to MP 0.*25) the current grade would need to be reduced to 12% from the existing 17%. Fill and surfacing material could be brought in from the Elk Meadows pit to reduce the grade in this section.

From MP 0.35 to MP 0.5, FR 642 has considerable tread damage due to its travel through seasonally wet areas and an adjacent diversion ditch. Fill material would be brought in to this section and drainage routes would be created so that water damage would not continue on a yearly basis.

Material for construction and for filling in pot-holes further up the road would be generated on-site. A culvert near the existing livestock gate would need to be replaced and the gate itself may need to be replaced with a new gate or cattle guard (as needed).

Temporary travel routes have been identified to access the project area. The project would attempt to locate these routes on topography that is generally flat so that road improvements would focus mostly on drainage and clearing considerations, with little change required to the natural topography. These temporary routes would remain closed to the public and be rehabilitated at the conclusion of the project. Approximately 1.0 mile has been identified for temporary routes. No temporary routes would be located in the Hanson Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area.

Upon completion of the project, FR 642 (Job Creek Road) would be closed at the Hanson Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) boundary to inhibit motorized travel into the IRA. The Travel Plan for the Sawtooth National Forest currently recognizes FR 642 for approximately 1.0 mile beyond the IRA boundary. The road currently travels 1.3 miles beyond the IRA boundary would be obliterated and rehabilitated at the conclusion of this project. (The final 0.3 miles of this road was previously identified for removal and rehabilitation as part of the Stanley Lake Vegetation Analysis Decision Notice in 1999.)

Approximately ½ mile of existing non-system two-track spur road adjacent to the Job Creek Road (FR 642), and within the Hanson Lakes Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA), would be obliterated and rehabilitated. This road segment travels toward and along the edge of the Job Creek meadow, is causing resource degradation and was identified for rehabilitation in the Stanley Lake Vegetation Analysis Decision Notice in 1999. This rehabilitation would occur at the conclusion of this project.

A roads analysis for travel routes within the project area was completed and supports the road realignment, obliteration and rehabilitation recommendations set forth in this proposed action. This report is on file at the Sawtooth NRA and is part of the project record for this action.

Project Design Features (refer to Appendix A)

Monitoring

Monitoring and oversight would occur throughout project implementation. Effectiveness monitoring would be accomplished one-year post project completion and then at subsequent 5 year intervals.

Public Involvement
This proposal was scoped internally among the Sawtooth NRA staff personnel and Sawtooth NF fire staff personnel. The project was posted in the Sawtooth National Forest Quarterly Schedule of Proposed Actions.

Public scoping for this project was completed using various methods. An "interested parties list" was generated that consisted of near-by landowners, permittees, local government entities, and concerned environmental organizations. An initial letter describing the project was sent to parties on this list in November of 2005. An informal collaboration meeting involving the Forest, property owners and interested parties was held at the Stanley Ranger Station in March of 2006 to generate input on project design and comments on the proposal. Lastly, a public notice was placed in the Challis Messenger and a letter describing the proposed action was developed and sent to the "interested parties list" in March of 2006. Recipients were encouraged to provide written and verbal comments throughout this scoping process. A total of 25 comment letters and emails were received; 9 of these comments came as a result of the formal scoping period after the public notice was published.

Identified Issues/Concerns
Comments received from the Job Creek Fuels Reduction Project public scoping fell primarily into four categories, or reoccurring themes. These are addressed below.

I. **Treatment in the Hanson Lakes IRA, and more specifically commercial logging treatments.** This included questioning the need and resulting benefits of treating this area, concern that a portion of treatment area is outside of a ½ mile distance from the Homestead Subdivision, and the desire have the Forest treat this area and employ sensitive logging techniques.

Response: *The proposed action includes Forest lands within the Hanson Lakes IRA up to 0.5 miles from the Homestead Subdivision boundary. Acreage within the IRA was decreased in order to have the greatest impact on fire behavior and dead tree removal, while minimizing the overall impact to the IRA. Areas that will be treated are along the perimeter of the IRA boundary where the greatest concentration of dead trees exists. These areas are all within 0.5 miles of the subdivision.*

The Fuels Specialist Report indicates probable wind direction and wind speed within and surrounding the project area. These factors in combination with long range spotting regularly seen in lodgepole pine crown fires indicate increased danger to the public and firefighters as well as private lands and dwellings. Removing trees within the identified area of the IRA would assist in reducing fire behavior and the potential for long range spotting.

Without treatment in the IRA, there will be a reduction in effectiveness. Firefighters will be more likely to stay engaged in structure protection if fire behavior is reduced further from the homes. Regardless of crown fire, there is a high probability of embers landing on and adjacent to homes, therefore structure protection forces will need to be on scene. If, as fire approaches, firefighters feel fire behavior is not reducing, they will

likely evacuate themselves from the area allowing these roof, deck and adjacent vegetation fires, which start as small innocuous fires to become established.

The project design features outline requirements to ensure sensitive logging implementation.

II. Forest Road 642 Realignment. This included concern for not wanting to change the use pattern of the road by realigning the road and connecting to Hwy 21, the desire to have the new alignment away from the private property boundary and to retain the gate, and concern for how the new road alignment would be signed.

Response: *The road realignment at the beginning of road FR 642 (intersecting with Hwy 21) will occur in a narrow band of lodgepole pine upland forest. This band is located between private land and a wet meadow. The Forest will make every effort to relocate the road away from the private land boundary, however the road design is somewhat limited by the landscape. The Forest does not intend on signing FR 642 along Hwy 21. Once vehicles turn on to the road from Hwy 21 there will be a sign, notifying motorists that the road ends in 1 mile.*

A gate currently exists approximately 0.5 miles up the Job Creek Road and will likely be retained due to the active grazing allotment in the area. A new latch may be installed at the remainder of this project. Currently there is a sign on the gate asking those who enter through it to close the gate. There is little probability that the gate will be replaced with a cattle guard, although it remains an option.

III. Concern for how logging slash would be treated. Comments suggested we remove or deal with logging slash in a prompt manner, especially in the areas directly adjacent to the subdivision, since the public perceives it as a fire hazard.

Response: *Slash will be piled at random locations throughout the sale area. Piles would be of varying sizes and some smaller piles will remain post harvest to accomplish wildlife resource objectives. Slash piles that result from timber harvesting would not represent a fire danger because they are concentrated fuel piles and will be located in openings away from the remaining trees. Slash piles will be located in areas determined to be non-threatening to structures. These piles will be burned at first availability, usually in late fall, early winter or early spring.*

IV. Desire for the Forest to analyze the effects of the project in an Environmental Assessment. This would also ensure that the project is appealable.

Response: *The proposed action falls within the scope and definition of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, 31.2, Category (10): Hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire, not to exceed 4,500 acres, and mechanical methods for crushing, piling, thinning, pruning, cutting, chipping, mulching, and mowing, not to exceed 1,000 acres. A*

Decision Memo is required, which is also appealable. A Legal Notice will be published once the decision is signed describing the appeal process for the project. The appeal period will be open for 45 days after the Legal Notice is published. An analysis of the impacts to the Hanson lakes IRA from the proposed action is required and will be part of the project file for this project.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Action

This project may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment as per Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, 31.2, (10) Hazardous fuels reduction activities using prescribed fire, not to exceed 4,500 acres, and mechanical methods for crushing, piling, thinning, pruning, cutting, chipping, mulching, and mowing, not to exceed 1,000 acres. A Decision Memo is required. The proposal has been reviewed internally and by the public. No new issues or extraordinary circumstances were raised. Counterpart Regulations and Agreements were used for oversight agency concurrence in lieu of formal US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries concurrence.

No heritage resources or properties were identified within the project area. To comply with Section 106, the Idaho State Historical Society (SHPO) was informed of these survey results. An official report will be submitted to the SHPO during the fall of 2006.

I have reviewed the proposed action and the project file and use the above referenced categorical exclusion in good faith. I am excluding this decision from further documentation.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision, as designed and with mitigation and management requirements, is consistent with the 2003 Revised Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) goals, objectives, standards and guidelines. It is also consistent with Public Law 92-400, the direction for managing the Sawtooth NRA, and will not cause substantial impairment to the scenic, natural, historic, pastoral, fish and wildlife, and other values, contributing to and available for public recreation and enjoyment. The categorical exclusion it applies is in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA.

Biological Assessments and Evaluations for this project have been prepared and are located in the project file. It was determined that this project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Snake River sp/su Chinook, Snake River steelhead, and Canada lynx.

It will have no effect on Columbia River bull trout, Snake River sockeye, westslope cutthroat trout, gray wolf, bald eagle, Ute ladies'-tresses Orchid, and Slender Moonwort.

An analysis of effects on Forest MIS species was completed for this project and is located in the project file.

The proposed activity will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed activity will not cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historic resources. No heritage resources or properties were identified within the project area.

An analysis of effects on the Hanson Lakes IRA was completed for this project and is located in the project file.

Implementation of this project will not violate the Clean Water Act or the Clean Air Act.

Appeal Opportunities
This action is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215.

Implementation Date
This decision may be implemented following a 45day appeal period, if no appeals are received. Realignment work for FR 642 and some encroachment treatments may occur this October or November. Timber removal would most likely begin next fall (2007) and continue during subsequent summer and fall months until complete.

Responsible Official and Contact Person
The responsible official is Sara E. Baldwin, Area Ranger, Sawtooth National Recreation Area, 5 North Fork Canyon Road, Ketchum, ID, 83340. For further information, contact the project leader, Bobbi Filbert at the Sawtooth NRA Headquarters, (208) 727-5000.

/Sara Baldwin/ 11 September, 2006
Sara E. Baldwin Date
Area Ranger

Appendix A

Project Design Features

General

1. Prior to project implementation all appropriate TES, Management Indicator Species (MIS) and heritage surveys would be completed within the project area and results would be placed in the project file.

Timber (including Logging Specifications)

1. Temporary roads, landings, and moderate to heavily used skid trails would be rehabilitated following harvest objectives. Existing non-system roads and two-tracks that are used for commercial timber operation would be obliterated and rehabilitated at the conclusion of the project. This would be accomplished by breaking compaction, providing surface drainage where necessary, and incorporating adjacent coarse wood onto the surface. A track hoe or similar equipment would typically be used to achieve these objectives. The results prepare and protect the disturbed surfaces for revegetation, while enhancing nutrients and promoting moisture and sediment retention. They also prevent continued use of the routes and reduce the visual impacts.
2. Log hauling or hazard tree reduction activities would be restricted on holiday weekends to avoid recreation conflicts.
3. Signs warning the public of logging trucks or tree removal activities would be put on Sawtooth National Forest roads where appropriate.
4. Mitigation measures would be accomplished through purchaser agreements listed in the timber sale or service contracts or would be identified and funded through sale area improvement (*KV-Knutson-Vandenberg*) collection plans. Cooperative funding sources (state and private, National Fire Plan) funds could also be utililized. A Forest Service botanist will participate in the coordination of area improvement plans.
5. The proposed actions would adhere to the Idaho Forest Practices Act - Title 38, Chapter 13, Idaho Code.
6. Road maintenance would be performed by the timber purchaser or funds would be collected on timber sale contracts to maintain roads and to prevent soil erosion.
7. Large slash piles and those near scenic view corridors would be burned.

Botanical Resources

1. A botanist would conduct TECPS plant surveys prior to proposed project implementation and provide adequate documentation to the project leader. If TECPS plants or potential habitat are located during surveys, amendments would be made to the Biological Assessment and/or Biological Evaluation and mitigation measures would be provided to protect species and potential habitat.
2. All areas disturbed during project implementation would be restored to natural grade. Stockpiled soil would be used when available. If determined necessary by a Forest Service botanist, the area would be seeded with a Forest Service approved and appropriate native seed mix.

Noxious weeds

1. New and existing populations of noxious weeds within and adjacent to the project areas would be inventoried and treated under the Sawtooth National Recreation Area's noxious weed program prior to project implementation.
2. Equipment washing stations would be established in designated areas or arrangements for equipment washing prior to equipment entering the Sawtooth National Forest would be made prior to project implementation. Soil, seeds, and plant material would be cleaned off equipment and vehicles that would be traveling off designated roads during implementation.
3. A Clean Equipment provision would be included in all timber sale or service contracts.
4. No activities associated with project implementation would occur in known noxious weed populations. If areas identified for project implementation are within known noxious weed sites, treatment/eradication efforts must be made prior to ground disturbing activities.
5. The proposed project areas and adjacent areas would be monitored for noxious weeds post project implementation under the Sawtooth National Recreation Area's noxious weed program for 2-3 growing seasons post implementation. All noxious weeds would be treated for eradication.

Wildlife

1. To be consistent with the Lynx Conservation Agreement, conservation measures outlined in the Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy, with particular reference to "Timber Management", would be applied. These measures are on file in the project record.

   The Stanley-Park LAU currently does not meet the 10% denning habitat threshold standard and special consideration needs to be given to treatment areas in the northeastern corner of the project. Field verified denning habitat in this area would be mapped and avoided (no treatments will occur in these areas).
2. Where present, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre patches of dense seedling/sapling conifers (potential snowshoe hare/lynx foraging habitat) would be maintained within the project area, when doing so would not compromise the objectives of the project.
3. In treatment areas that have been field validated by a Forest Biologist as suitable snowshoe hare/lynx foraging habitat, defensible space treatments would be limited to a 120-foot radius surrounding structures, private land, and developments, and along roads that are directly adjacent to these developments. *The 120-foot vegetation clearance was determined to be the most effective distance required to reduce home ignitions (Cohen 1998).*
4. Mechanical tree harvest or hand felling treatments would not occur from May 15 through June 30th due to calving and fawning that occurs in the area.
5. Due to the abundance and diversity of R4 Forest Sensitive and neotropical migratory birds that nest and forage within and surrounding the project area, mechanical tree harvesting would not occur from May 15th through July 31st.

Hand felling treatments would be allowed after June 30th. Identified TES or MIS nests would be buffered accordingly (distance is based on species identified). Treatments would be delayed if buffering could not adequately be attained.

6. Where active northern goshawk nests are identified or territories are known to exist, a buffer zone that will equal no less than 30 acres will be established around the nest tree (Reynolds et al 1992) or potential nest tree (nest tree from the previous year). No treatment or activity from the proposed action will occur within this buffer zone. This equals a radius of approximately 650 feet from the nest tree. Where other active raptor nests are identified a buffer of at least 200 feet would be established around the nest tree.
7. Dead and defective tree habitat is important to a variety of wildlife species. Snags, live trees and logs will be selected for retention and recruitment and would meet or exceed objects outlined in the Revised Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Appendix A. Emphasize retaining snags with existing cavities, feeding holes, or other evidence of use by cavity or snag dependent species.
    i. Defective large trees (lodgepole pine dbh > 10") with signs of internal decay, with trunk wounds, cavities, bark missing or broken tops/branches or broomed trees would be retained at a minimum of 5 per acre. These trees should be located or clumped with the retained standing dead trees.
    ii. Retain a minimum of 8 large diameter snags (dbh >10") per acre throughout the timbered stands within the project area, or as many as possible if fewer occur, preferably in clumps. In areas where large diameter Douglas-fir, aspen or Engelmann spruce occur, retain these clumps in association with this habitat.
    iii Emphasize retaining large snags (dbh>10") in or along the edges of patch cuts, natural meadows, or openings.
9. Coarse woody debris would be retained outside the 500 foot buffer zone surrounding private land borders, structures, and Forest developed sites. The desired range for coarse woody debris for PVG 10 (Persistent Lodgepole Pine) is 5-19 tons per acre, approximated across the activity area. Emphasize retaining coarse wood in the largest size class available (dbh>10"). This coarse wood should be located near snags and defective trees that are retained.
10. Where possible, at least one slash pile per acre would be retained in all treatment areas, including patch
    cut openings, outside the 500 foot buffer zone surrounding private land borders, structures, developed sites and access roads in the project area, for small mammal, bird, and amphibian cover.
11. Emphasize retaining all live, diseased, dying or standing dead Douglas-fir trees with a dbh equal to or greater than 18 inches where they do not pose a risk or hazard.
12. Emphasize retaining subalpine fir where it would not compromise the objectives of the project.

Soil, Water, and Fish

1. No mechanized harvest activities would occur within Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Field verification of features requiring RCA protection, and site-specific delineation of RCAs should occur prior to project implementation. Where site specific

delineations are not completed, default RCA widths for lodgepole forests would be applied as defined in the Sawtooth FLRMP as follows (App B):

   i. Two site potential tree heights (150 feet) either side of perennial streams.
   ii. one site potential tree height (75 feet) either side of intermittent streams, and around ponds, lakes, and wetlands.

2. Staging areas, including areas for the maintenance and re-fueling of heavy equipment, as well as areas for storage of fuel and other toxicants, would be located outside of RCAs, well away from streamside areas or drainage ways, and follow standard Best Management Practices. Where available, existing disturbed areas (e.g. old borrow areas) should be utilized. Care should be taken to avoid lubricant and fuel spills in all project areas.
3. In naturally forested environments, no fuel reduction treatments would occur closer than 35 feet from perennial channels.
4. In order to minimize unnecessary disturbance, temporary routes would utilize existing gentle topography whenever possible (aka "stump roads") and avoid altering the existing conditions (i.e. blading a surface including cuts and fills).
5. In order to protect water quality, channel conditions, and critical habitat for ESA listed salmon, the Road 682 ford through Valley Creek would not be utilized for any project related objective, including hauling, administration, and worksite access. Alternative routes provide more appropriate access.
6. Most treatments would occur between mid summer and late fall when climatic and site conditions are generally dry to avoid unnecessary resource damage. Winter logging may occur when snow depths are sufficient to prevent resource damage.
7. Should water for construction activities be withdrawn from fish bearing waters, intake hoses shall be screened with mesh size 3/32 of an inch or smaller. Drafting locations would avoid sensitive locations, and be reviewed by a resource specialist prior to use.
8. Where conifer encroachment in natural openings is treated within the RCAs, such treatments will be non-mechanized. Where necessary, burning of piled brush and limbs would occur outside RCAs.
9. Where culverts are to be temporarily or permanently installed or replaced, prior to construction, fish surveys will determine the presence of ESA protected fish species (none expected) within a reach extending from 10 meters upstream and 100 meters downstream of the crossing. If ESA fish are observed, all work on the crossing will cease and consultation reinitiated. A minimum necessary length of stream at the crossing will be dewatered during installation and/or removal of the culverts, with water routed around the work area via pump or similar non-porous conduit.
10. Where temporary or replacement stream crossing structures are to remain through a runoff season, the structures will be designed to pass the estimated 100 year flood event and all potential salmonid species and life stages.

Comment: ??

Recreation

1. No timber decking or equipment staging would occur within meadows.

Visuals

1. The unit Landscape Architect would review and assist in the development of removal concepts, access, landing sites, disposal and rehabilitation to assure protection of the visual resource.
2. Retain screening (vegetation) between FR 642 realignment Highway 21, along Stanley Lake Creek meadow.
3. Where possible, within 250' of highway corridors do not allow landings or the mechanical piling of slash. Make effort to cut stumps in these areas to within 6" of the ground.
4. Duration of visual impacts from ground disturbing and vegetation removal activities may extend to three years. This is especially applicable to landings and large slash piles within Hwy 21 view corridors. Consider reseeding in areas, with a native seed mix authorized by a Forest Botonist, where natural recovery is questionable.

Hanson Lakes IRA

1. In the vicinity (+ /– 150 feet) of Job Creek and FR 642 ensure that stumps are flush cut or cut as low to the ground as safely possible.
2. In other areas, minimize stump heights (1' or less).
3. After slash piles are burned, ensure that unburned material and ash pile is scattered.
4. Utilize any existing user created trails and ghost roads for skidding materials to landings. Minimize the number of skid trails. Scarify skid trails at the conclusion of the project to enhance natural regeneration.
5. Restrict harvest to the late summer, fall or early winter months when soils are dry and firm, to minimize soil disturbance and erosion.
6. Limit landing in the IRA to one site only, if required. This site must be approved by the Recreation or Wilderness Manager prior to any harvest occurring in the Hanson Lakes IRA.