



Decision Memo

Bonneville Power Administration Deck Sale

USDA Forest Service Detroit Ranger District Willamette National Forest Marion County, Oregon

T.10S., R.5E., Sections 2, 3, and 10, Willamette Meridian

Proposed Action

To reduce additional fuel hazards on the landscape, the Detroit Ranger District (DERD) is proposing to work with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to skid, deck, and sell trees felled in February 2022. The felled trees, located just north of the DERD administration site, will be skidded and decked at landings identified by DERD's interdisciplinary team as the most efficient and least impactful strategy for removing these fuel hazards (see map in Appendix 1). Specific design criteria, including seasonal restrictions are explained later under "Design Criteria."

This is a cooperative project between two federal agencies, the BPA and DERD. The following agency responsibilities are:

- BPA will be responsible for skidding, processing, slash piling, managing woody debris, and decking, with Forest Service coordination.
- DERD will be responsible for the sale and associated loading and hauling.
- DERD will be responsible for slash burning, if necessary, with BPA coordination.
- BPA will be responsible for revegetation with Forest Service coordination.

Purpose and Need

In 2020, the Lionshead and Beachie Creek fires burned through almost half of the Detroit Ranger District, including the administrative site located just south of the BPA powerline corridor. In February 2022, BPA felled hazard trees along their powerlines in accordance with their Transmission System Vegetation Management Program Environmental Impact Statement and Memorandum of Understanding. This vegetation management action left many trees felled on the landscape just north of the DERD administrative site, increasing fuel hazards in the area.

Both agencies are continuing to recover and prepare for a future with fire on the landscape. Removing the felled trees now will reduce the chances that they will add fuel to a fire event within proximity of the administrative site.



Categorical Exclusion Criteria

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as 36 CFR 220.6(e)(13): “Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 1/2 mile of temporary road construction. The proposed action may include incidental removal of live or dead trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.” (FSH 1909.15 Sec. 31.2)

This category of action is applicable because the proposed action is to skid, deck, and sell dead trees.

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – this proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect northern spotted owl, and northern spotted owl critical habitat. The proposed action may adversely impact individuals or habitat, but is not likely to result in jeopardy of monarch butterfly (BPA Biological Assessment and USFWS’ Letter of Concurrence, December 6, 2021, Tails #: 0101EOFW00-2022-I-0112, in the project record). There would be no effect on other Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed terrestrial species or their designated critical habitat. This project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Upper Willamette Chinook salmon fish habitat. Consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service was completed under the Timber Management Treatments on the Willamette National Forest Programmatic Biological Opinion (January, 2018).
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – Riparian Reserves are a large part of this project area; 172 feet on both sides of any stream in this location. Riparian Reserves were heavily impacted by the 2020 fires. Trees felled in this project area were fire killed trees that could fall into the high voltage powerlines. This project will result in minimal additional impacts to Riparian Reserves.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – none present.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – none present.
- Research natural areas – none present.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – none present. Tribal consultation started April 1, 2022 with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon. No comments received. Design criteria outlines required actions given inadvertent discovery.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – none known to be present. Pedestrian surveys completed by BPA archaeologist in May 2022 (Cultural Resources



Survey for 2022 Jones Canyon-Santiam Danger Tree Project in project record). Design criteria outlines required actions given inadvertent discovery.

Design Criteria

The following is a list of design criteria and/or mitigation developed for this project to avoid/reduce the environmental effects of the proposed activities:

- Following the design criteria for Threatened Species, the construction of new system roads within 500 feet of class 1 streams, or within 200 feet of any other stream is prohibited.
- Timber transport is allowed during the wet season (generally October 16 to May 14) on aggregate surfaced roads **ONLY** if all the following criteria are met:
 - Roads must meet design standards for being able to support wet weather haul (e.g., competent subgrade, minimum 6" depth of compacted aggregate) as determined by engineering during timber sale planning.
 - Haul routes must be inspected weekly, or more frequently if weather conditions warrant. Inspections will focus on road surface condition, drainage maintenance, and sources of sediment delivery to streams.
 - In sub-watersheds, with ESA-listed fish habitat, adequate cross drainage has been installed near streams so that there is less than 200 feet of ditch-line (on each side of crossing) draining directly to any stream.
 - On road segments that have the potential to deliver sediment to any stream channel, implement erosion control measures to prevent offsite movement of soil. This work will occur prior to the wet season (wet season being generally October 16 to May 14).
 - The approach and crossing of each ESA-listed fish habitat stream is paved or has a high quality, well drained, and recently maintained aggregate surface.
- Timber transport will be stopped by the timber sale administrator when road sediment can be observed moving into ditches, perennial, or intermittent streams.
- When possible, use existing log landing and skid trail networks, or previously disturbed ground, for layout of and sighting of these features. Compacted ground may not require subsoiling to mitigate this form of soil resource damage depending on the intended future use of the ground (i.e., in the powerline corridor). Run any changes to designated skidding routes and landing sites by Detroit Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) with time for review and include GIS shapefiles.
- Leave 240 linear feet of logs greater than 20-inch diameter per acre, or the largest available, and in lengths of 20 feet or more.
- If any slash is created by the removal of the decks, it needs to be piled no less than 100 feet from powerlines or chipped and scattered to a depth of no more than 3 inches. Burn



pile activities should consider the use of alternative slash management, including chipping, biochar production, and lop/scatter to reduce impacts to soil resources. Fuels treatments should avoid burning and piling on existing high priority weed infestations. Instead skip and chip. See weeds map below in Appendix 2 and in project record.

- Temporary spur roads shall be limited to no more than ½ mile in total length and wherever possible use existing impacted areas. Existing skid roads will be used as much as possible to minimize soil compaction. Obtain gravel for road construction and reconstruction from a weed-free rock source. Rock sources will be inspected by qualified weed inspector.
- All areas of exposed soil related to the proposed action (such as landings, system and non-system roads, decommissioned roads, etc.) will be seeded with genetically local, native, weed-free seed and straw. If seeding occurs outside of desired window (September through November), mulching (weed-free straw, slash, mulch provided by USFS) is required. Pretreat high priority weed sites in and adjacent to harvest units and associated roads and haul routes to ensure weed seed will not be spread by project activities.
- All off-road equipment will be cleaned to remove all dirt and debris prior to entering National Forest Systems Lands. Landings will not be created in or adjacent to invasive plant infestations. Flag existing high priority weed populations and avoid skidding, driving equipment, and decking in flagged areas. High priority noxious weeds would be surveyed and treated after ground disturbing activities are complete to prevent newly created bare ground from being colonized by noxious weeds.
- Project implementers will adhere to the Willamette Road Rules published in December 2016, available in project record.
- Should scope or design of the proposed project be altered or changed, additional review by the Willamette National Forest Heritage Resource Program will be required. If any previously unrecorded cultural resources are discovered during the course of this project, all project-related activities will cease, and the consultation process as outlined in the Willamette National Forest Unanticipated Discovery Plan and Section 800.13 of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservations regulations 36 CFR 800 must be initiated.

Decision and Rationale

Based on my review of the information presented in this document and the supporting documents in the project record, I have decided to implement the proposed action as described above.

Through experience and review of similar projects, I have concluded that this project is not a major Federal action. It will have limited context and intensity, individually or cumulatively, to the biological, physical, social, or economic components of the human environment. It does not pose a violation of Federal, State, or local law requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The action that I have selected falls within a category established by the Forest Service that normally does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the



human environment and no extraordinary circumstances exist that would cause the proposed action to have any significant environmental effects. Therefore, this action is excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment, so neither will be prepared.

Public Involvement

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Willamette National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions on May 13, 2022 and updated periodically during the analysis (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/willamette/landmanagement/projects>). A scoping letter was emailed to members of the public and organizations who have previously expressed an interest in similar projects.

Comments on the proposed project were accepted from May 13, 2022, to June 3, 2022. One comment was received from the Marion County Board of Directors indicating their support of this project. Their names and address, as commentors, are considered part of the public record and are available for public inspection in the project file available at the Detroit Ranger District.

During internal scoping, Detroit Ranger District resource specialists raised no issues and found no significant effects on the human environment in relation to implementing this proposed action. All supporting documentation is in the project file available at the Detroit Ranger District.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan. The project was designed in conformance with Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines as well as Standards and Guidelines for the following Land Allocations and Management Area: Matrix land allocation and Special Use permit (MA-13) management area.

I find that this project complies with all laws, regulations, and policies regarding skidding, decking, and selling of dead trees for the protection of area values, health and safety, and future development. Table 1 outlines the major laws, regulations, and policies with respect to Code of Federal Regulations and displays how this project complies with those laws.



Table 1: Compliance with Other Laws, Regulations, and Policies

Year Enacted	Title	Summary	How applied in this project
1973	Endangered Species Act (ESA)	Provides broad protection for species of fish, wildlife and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered in the U.S. or elsewhere. Provisions are made for listing species, as well as for recovery plans and the designation of critical habitat for listed species. The Act outlines procedures for federal agencies to follow when taking actions that may jeopardize listed species, and contains exceptions and exemptions.	The project is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. Applicable procedures were followed with respect to threatened and/or endangered species. Fish Consultation completed under the "Timber Management Treatments on the Willamette National Forest" programmatic Biological Opinion (signed 2018). Terrestrial species informal consultation completed on December 6, 2021, Tails #: 0101EOFW00-2022-I-0112.
1976	National Forest Management Act (NFMA)	Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to assess forest lands, develop a management program based on multiple-use, sustained-yield principles, and implement a resource management plan for each unit of the National Forest System. It is the primary statute governing the administration of national forests.	This project was developed in full compliance with NFMA via compliance with the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan 1990, as amended. The project follows appropriate standards and guidelines and management direction for the Management Allocations in the project area.
1987	Clean Water Act	This act establishes a non-degradation policy for all federally proposed projects. Compliance with the Clean Water Act would be accomplished through planning, application, and monitoring of Best Management Practices (BMPs).	This project complies with the Clean Water Act. Project Design Criteria and Best Management Practices would adequately protect waterbodies in the project area
1994	Northwest Forest Plan	The Northwest Forest Plan provides Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) for skidding, decking, and selling dead trees in a Matrix and Riparian Reserves designated area.	The primary goal is to reduce fuel hazards on the landscape where important communication and administration infrastructure are located in a forested landscape. This is compatible because it meets the desired condition of enhancing vitality of surrounding communities (Northwest Forest Plan EIS, p.142 B-135) in the Special Use permit area (MA-13)

Administrative Review (Appeal) Opportunities

Effective March 5, 2014, the Forest Service will no longer offer notice, comment, and appeal opportunities for categorically excluded projects pursuant to 36 CFR Part 219. On February 7, 2014, the President signed into law the Agricultural Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-79 (i.e., Farm



Bill). Section 8006(a) of the 2014 Farm Bill repealed the Appeals Reform Act, Pub. L. No. 102-381, 106 Stat. 1419 (1992). Section 8006(b) directs that the pre-decisional objection process established in Section 428 of division E of the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-74, shall not be applicable to categorically excluded projects or activities. The Forest Service will continue to offer public involvement opportunities for categorically excluded projects as provided for in the agency's NEPA Procedures, see 36 CFR 220.4(d) (SOPA) and 36 CFR 220.4(e) and 220.6(c) (scoping).

Comments received on the proposed action will be reviewed and considered prior to making a final decision; however, the project is not subject to appeal.

Implementation Date

Implementation is anticipated to begin September 2022.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Adrienne Strubb, NEPA Planner, adrienne.strubb@usda.gov, 44125 North Santiam Hwy SE, Detroit OR 97342. Work: 541-460-0861.

Approved by:

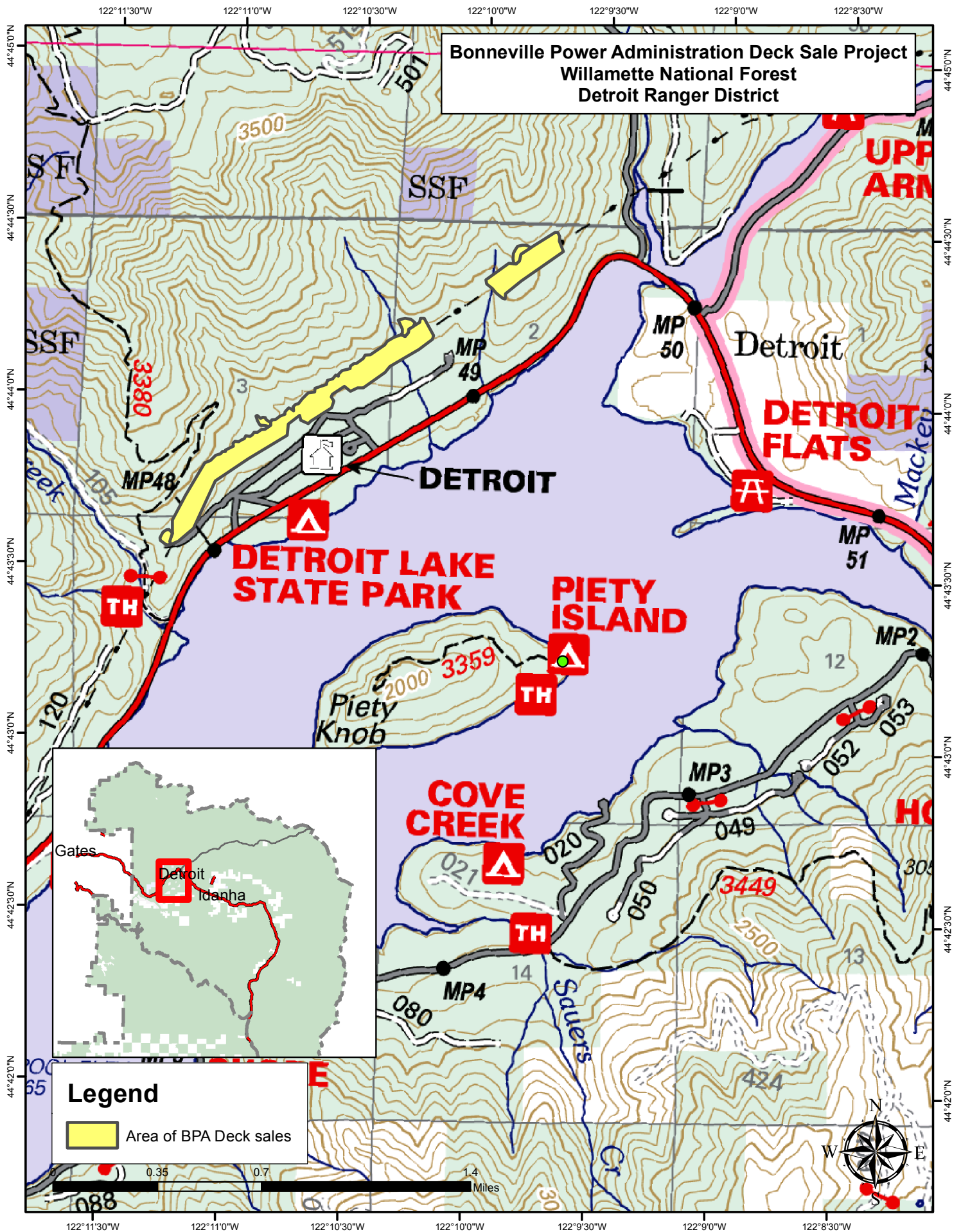
Shawn Rivera
District Ranger
Detroit Ranger District
Willamette National Forest

Date

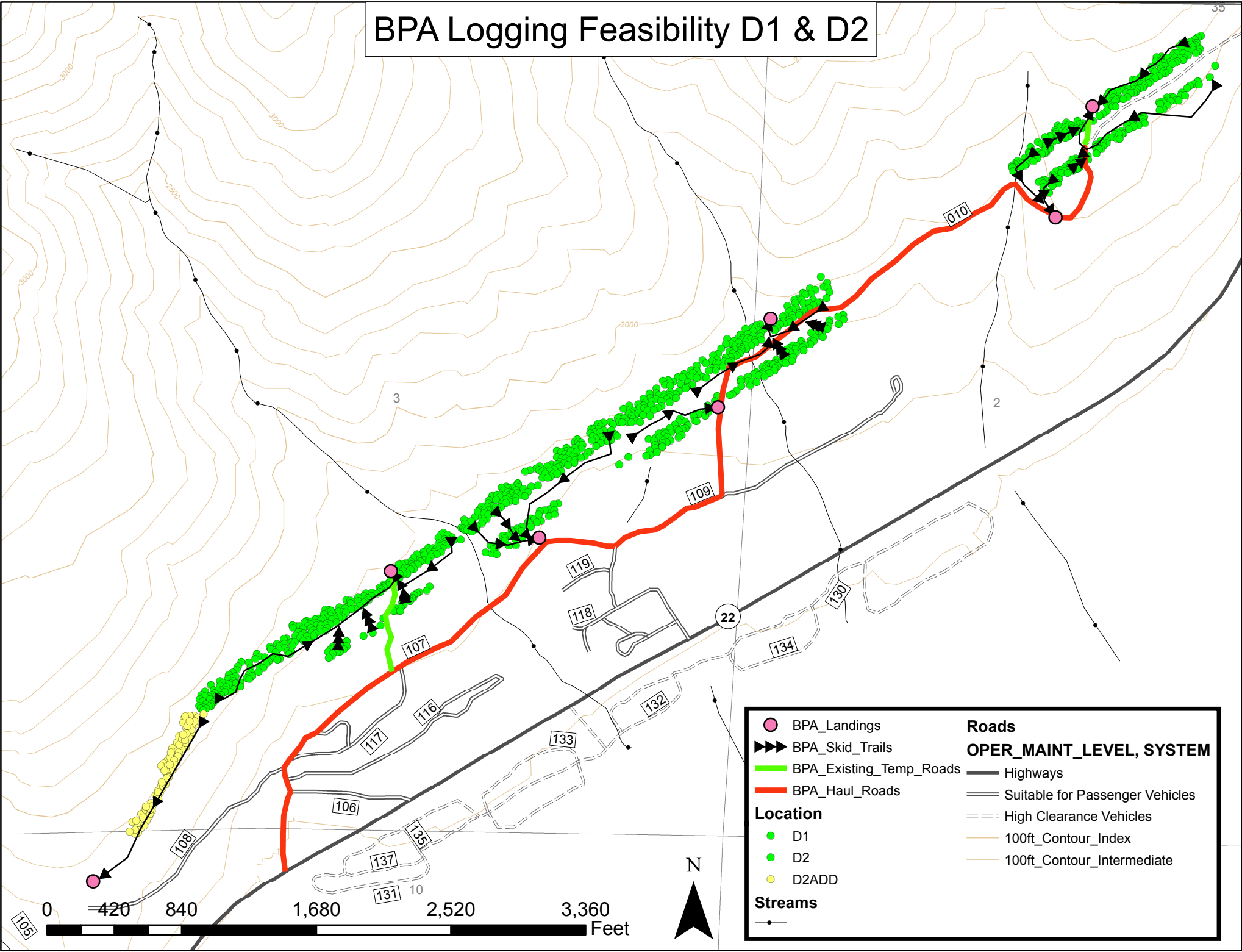
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APPENDIX 1



BPA Logging Feasibility D1 & D2



BPA Area D Weed Map

