

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Vincent Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date:	12/2022
Proponent:	Chas Vincent
Location:	T26N, R32W, Section 22
County:	Sanders

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Chas Vincent is requesting an Alternative Practice (AP) to harvest trees in an adjacent wetland of a Class 1 Stream. The AP would allow harvest in excess of the 50 % retention requirements found in ARM 36.11.305. Chas is proposing to leave all old mature western red cedar and commercially thin small cedar and other shade tolerant species.

According to MCA 77-5-301 through 307, DNRC is authorized to administer and enforce the provisions of the SMZ Law. This Law was developed to protect the public interest of water quality and quantity within forested areas; provide for standards, oversights and penalties to ensure forest practices conserve the integrity of SMZ's; provide guidelines for wildlife management within SMZ's; and allow operators necessary flexibility to use practices appropriate to site-specific conditions in the SMZ. ARM 36.11.301 through 313 further specify SMZ boundaries, allowable activities and prohibitions within the SMZ, penalties and other related provisions.

Allowances of this request would include:

1. Removal of trees in excess of the standard requirement for adjacent wetlands. Retain at least 40% of the standing trees within the adjacent wetland with the majority in the largest size class present.

Mitigation measures associated with this AP would include:

1. Ground conditions would be frozen or a minimum of 18" snow depth.
2. No equipment would track within 50' of the Class 1 Stream Channel.
3. All sub-merchantable trees would be protected to the fullest extent possible.

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

MT DNRC Service Forester, MT DNRC Forest Practices Program Manager, Chas Vincent.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

N/A

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A

Commercial Harvest would adhere to retention requirements for adjacent wetlands of Class 1 Streams.

Alternative B

Commercial Harvest would remove trees in excess of 50% retention requirement. Action alternative would retain at least 40% of the standing trees within the adjacent wetland with the majority in the largest size class present.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain *POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS* following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Alternative A and B

Harvest would take place in accordance with SMZ Law, Equipment Operation in Adjacent Wetlands. This rule is designed to limit soil compaction and disturbance.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Alternative A and B

Harvest would take place in accordance with SMZ Law, Equipment Operation in Adjacent Wetlands. This rule is designed to limit effects to water quality, quantity, and distribution.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

None.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Alternative A

Commercial Harvest would adhere to retention requirements for adjacent wetlands of Class 1 Streams.

A query of the Montana Natural Heritage Program shows nine vascular plant Species of Concern for T26N, R32W. Winter harvest conditions would protect vegetation, and would minimize impacts to the greatest extent possible. Impacts would be minimal to low in adjacent wetlands and those areas, it is anticipated, would recover quickly.

Alternative B

Commercial Harvest would remove trees in excess of 50% retention requirements. All "old-growth" cedar would be left on site. Action alternative would retain at least 40% of the standing trees within the adjacent wetland with the majority in the largest size class present.

A query of the Montana Natural Heritage Program shows nine vascular plant Species of Concern for T26N, R32W. Winter harvest conditions would protect vegetation, and would minimize impacts to the greatest extent possible. Impacts would be minimal to low in adjacent wetlands and those areas, it is anticipated, would recover quickly.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Alternative A and B

A query of the Montana Natural Heritage Program shows 33 Species of Concern for T26N, R32W. There are 9 mammals, 16 birds, 2 reptiles, and 3 fish. Any impacts would be none to very minimal as the work will be short-term and in winter conditions.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Alternative A and B

A query of the Montana Natural Heritage Program identifies 44 plants and animals that are species of concern.

Proposed actions may temporarily cause slight shifts in use by listed species of concern, however, no key habitat components are known to exist in the AP project areas and long-term use is not expected to appreciably change. A low risk of direct, indirect and cumulative effects to listed species of concern would be expected with the action alternative.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

N/A

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Alternative A

Commercial Harvest would adhere to retention requirements for adjacent wetlands of Class 1 Streams.

Alternative B

Commercial Harvest would remove trees in excess of 50% Class 1 retention requirements.

Action alternative would retain at least 40% of the standing trees within the adjacent wetland with the majority in the largest size class present.

Visually it will look more open with large mature trees and small openings.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

None

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

None

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

None.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Allow logs to be harvested that would otherwise be left on site.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

No appreciable change.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Negligible amounts.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

None.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

None

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

None, private property.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

None.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

None.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Nathan Cole	Date: 11/18/2022
	Title: Plains Unit Service Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:
Alternative B is selected for implementation.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:
No significant impacts were identified.

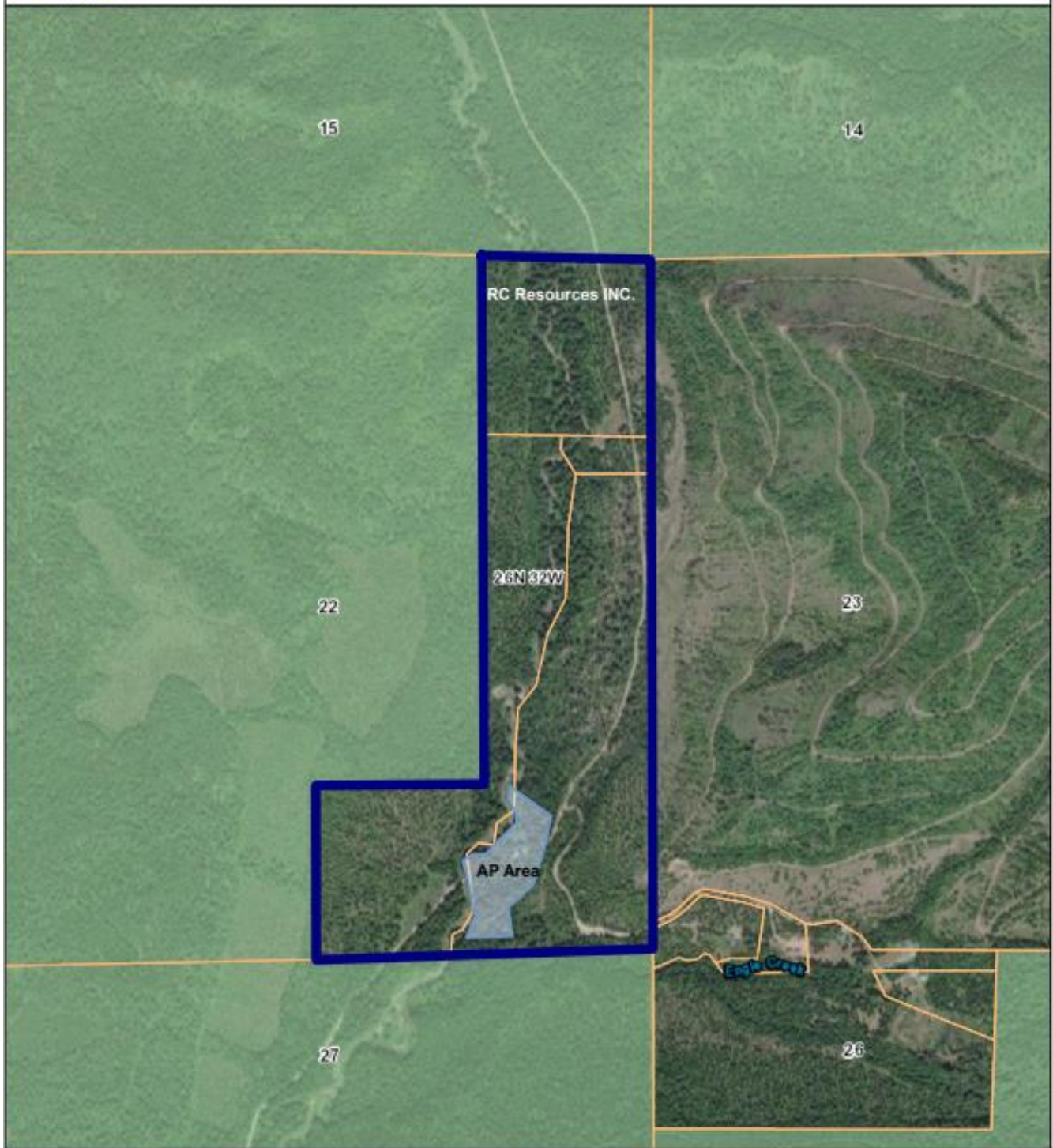
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: David M. Olsen Title: Program Manager
Signature: <i>David M. Olsen</i>	Date: 11/21/2022

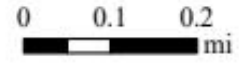


Vincent Alt. Practice



County Boundary	Section	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management
Public Lands	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management	Section of Land Management
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11/21/2022
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