DECISION MEMO
CRASHED HARVEY TIMBER SALE
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
HARVEY CREEK
FORTINE RANGER DISTRICT
LINCOLN COUNTY, MONTANA

BACKGROUND
The purpose and need for this project is to control the spread of insects and disease, specifically Douglas-fir beetle and spruce beetle, and salvage the blown down, root sprung, and dead or dying trees to contribute to a supply of timber for local needs. This would help move the project area towards the desired conditions outlined in the 2015 Kootenai Forest Plan, specifically:

- **FW-DC-VEG-06.** Root disease fungi, such as *Armillaria* and *Phellinus*, are killing fewer trees as the composition of the forests trends toward less susceptible, tree species, such as: western larch, ponderosa pine, and western white pine. Forest insects, such as Douglas-fir bark beetle, mountain and western pine beetles, fir engraver beetle and the western spruce budworm, are generally causing less tree mortality. Impacts from the non-native fungus that causes the white pine blister rust disease are reduced as the abundance of rust resistant western white pine and whitebark pine increases.

- **MA6-DC-VEG-01:** In much of this MA, vegetation management activities have a dominant role in affecting the composition, structure, and pattern of vegetation. These management activities trend the vegetation towards the desired conditions. Although natural ecological processes and disturbances are still present, they are influenced more by human activity in the MA than in others.

- **FW-DC-TBR-01:** Production of timber contributes to ecological, social, and/or economic sustainability, and associated desired conditions. A sustainable mix of timber products (including both sawtimber and non-sawtimber) is offered under a variety of harvest and contract methods in response to market demand. Salvage of dead and dying trees captures as much of the economic value of the wood as possible while retaining the amount needed for wildlife habitat, soil productivity, and ecosystem functions.

The Crashed Harvey Project will salvage harvest approximately 45 acres of blowdown and Douglas-fir beetle and spruce beetle infested trees located on National Forest System Lands south of the community of Stryker in the Harvey Creek drainage. The legal description for the project is Township 33 North, Range 25 West, the west half of Section 36. Harvest operations are expected to utilize tractor skidding and would likely occur in the non-winter season. The total volume estimated for removal is 250-300 MBF. Following harvest, the unit would be excavator piled and burned. A stand ready to be regenerated would be left after salvage and slash disposal activities. Seasonally open and year round open roads would be used to access the harvest area. Road access would not change after project is complete. No temporary road construction would be needed. Necessary Best Management Practice (BMP) road maintenance work would occur to bring the road to BMP standards.
**Decision.**

I have decided to implement the Crashed Harvey project as described above and shown on the attached map. This action is consistent with the Forest Plan for the Kootenai National Forest and represents responsible forest management.

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 ½ mile of temporary road construction. This category of action(s) is applicable because the area to be treated is less than 250 acres and no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction is necessary to treat the area. All trees to be removed are dead or dying due to being blown over or insect infestation.

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 – A Biological Assessment for the Crashed Harvey project was prepared and resulted in the following findings for terrestrial species: Implementation of the proposed federal action, Crashed Harvey – blowdown salvage sale, may affect, not likely to adversely affect the Grizzly bear, Canada lynx and Designated Canada lynx critical habitat. Aquatic species: Implementation of the proposed federal action, Crashed Harvey – blowdown salvage sale, will have no effect on the white sturgeon, bull trout and designated bull trout critical habitat.

A Biological Evaluation for the Crashed Harvey project was prepared and resulted in the following findings for sensitive terrestrial species: Implementation of the proposed federal action, Crashed Harvey – blowdown salvage sale, may impact individuals or their habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability for black-backed woodpeckers, Townsend’s big-eared bats, or western toads. No impact is expected for the remaining eleven species on the Kootenai National Forest sensitive species list.

Aquatic sensitive species: Implementation of the proposed federal action, Crashed Harvey – blowdown salvage sale, will have no impact on Western pearlshell mussels or Westslope cutthroat trout.

- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – No flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds are present within the area of treatment.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – The project area is not within or adjacent to a wilderness area,
wilderness study area, or a national recreation area, and therefore no extraordinary circumstances exist.

- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – There are no inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas within or adjacent to the project area, and therefore no extraordinary circumstances exist.

- Research natural areas – There are no research natural areas in or near the project area, and therefore no extraordinary circumstances exist.

- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – There are no known sites in the proposed area. If unknown sites were encountered during implementation, these sites would be subject to appropriate Tribal Historic Preservation Officer review and comment, as per the 36 CFR 800 compliance process.

- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – Portions of the project area have been previously surveyed for archeological resources. Surveys would continue and would be completed prior to implementation according to the National Historic Preservation Act. Any undocumented archeological resources found during project implementation would be reported to a Forest Service archaeologist and, if necessary, project design would be modified to avoid any impacts to those resources.

No other issues or concerns were expressed during the scoping period for this project. All documentation to support the above determinations are found in the project file.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Kootenai National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. The Project Proposal was mailed to 11 interested parties including local elected officials, tribal representatives, local newspapers, and individuals. No comments were received in response to the proposal.
**FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

This project is consistent with Forest Plan management direction, standards, and guidelines. No effects to Kootenai National Forest Management Indicator Species (MIS) were identified in our analysis. This project meets requirements found in but not limited to the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

This project is not subject to appeal. Implementation is anticipated to begin in April, 2016. For specific project information, please contact Ron Komac, Environmental Coordinator at 949 US Hwy 93 North, Eureka, MT 59917, (406) 296-2536; or by email at rkomac@fs.fed.us.

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BRYAN L. DONNER  
District Ranger  

Date

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