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Existing Landscape Condition

Simulation of Prescribed Fire and Understory Removal

Viewshed: Greater Whitefish Area

Prescribed Fire Scenic Effects: Treatments would be implemented over a 5-20 year or longer time period as areas may need to be treated multiple times to achieve the desired results. Burn timing and ignition patterns will be staggered to create a mosaic vegetation pattern up to 25% of the project area where prescribed units are located would have visual evidence of burn activity.

Year 1 – Up to half of the fuels treatment units would potentially burn with high intensity, reflective of the fire regime with these primary characteristics:

Mortality – seen as red needles and tree canopy, blackened stands, some standing snags and blackened tree boles and ground cover. The ground would be more visible with the strong linear patterns of standing stands becoming dominant. Most of the high intensity burn patterns would occur on the northwest facing slopes where the vegetation patterns are highly and densely textured. On the southeastern slopes the burn patterns would appear more moderate to light where vegetation patterns are more open allowing prescribed burns to blend in.

Burned canopy – intermixed in a mosaic pattern of unburned edges with low, moderate and high intensity patterns. A growing season would reduce the effects to the remaining scorched tree trunks, and dead saplings.

Year 5 - The landscape character changes would be visually noticeable, but would be enhanced in the long term by improving the scenic stability from a moderately low to a moderate or high sustainability. Large snags that would initially be seen as blackened would turn silver becoming more scenic as they are highlighted. The ground cover will green up reducing color contrast.