Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA) Cooperating Agency Meeting
March 6, 2017
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
**Meeting Objectives:**
- Gain an understanding of why the Forest Service believes a landscape-scale analysis is appropriate and timely;
- Discuss the LaVA analysis approach to-date;
- Engage cooperators early in the process to develop a sense of ownership and to work collaboratively to develop a proposal that makes areas more resilient to future disturbance, reduces fire hazards to communities and high-value resources, and provides a sustainable supply of wood and biomass consistent with sound forest management; and
- Determine how to best move forward with cooperating agency support and interaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Why We’re Here</td>
<td>Dennis Jaeger</td>
<td>0930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions and Housekeeping</td>
<td>Melissa Martin</td>
<td>0945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition-based NEPA: A Cutting-edge Analysis Approach</td>
<td>Melissa Martin</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Medicine Bow LaVA Analysis: Project Overview</td>
<td>Melissa Martin</td>
<td>1015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK**</td>
<td></td>
<td>1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process for Determining Potential Treatment Opportunity Areas (TOAs)</td>
<td>Paula Guenther</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions and Answers: Feedback from Meeting Participants</td>
<td>Group Facilitator: Melissa Martin</td>
<td>1130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Group Facilitator: Paula Guenther</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ideas to ensure a transparent, inclusive process</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Next Meeting: Commitment to action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Dennis Jaeger</td>
<td>1215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting adjourned</td>
<td></td>
<td>1230</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** We have scheduled a long break to allow meeting participants an opportunity to view project information and to ask questions of Forest Service resource specialists.
Condition-based NEPA – A Cutting-edge Analysis Approach

• What it’s Not
• What it Is
• How it Works
Condition-based NEPA –
What it’s Not
Condition-based NEPA – What it Is

- Generally completed at a landscape scale;
- Based on a set of objectives and desired conditions;
- Compare Existing Conditions to Desired Conditions to identify gaps/needs;
- Use gaps to identify a range of treatment caps and options to meet objectives and move toward a Desired Condition
  - **Descriptive in nature:** Where we find condition X, we will do treatment Y to result in condition Z... *using a set of design criteria, mitigation measures, limits on treatments by watershed or other constraints, etc., without necessarily mapping the treatment units*

- Uses existing data sets, spatial layers, and best available science information (BASI) to conduct environmental analysis;
- Results in a decision that is flexible, adaptive, and that commits to completing a comprehensive set of field checks prior to implementation; and
- Relies heavily on strong collaborative relationships, connections to science, and broad agreement about the purpose of the project.
Descriptive Treatments

- Approximately 130,000 acres of lodgepole pine stands are in mature structural stages; Forest Plan desired condition is 80,000 acres.
- Propose to convert up to 50,000 acres of mature stands to young stands over a 10-year period.
- Foresters would determine which stands to convert after on-the-ground assessments are completed.
How Condition-based NEPA works

- **NEPA Analysis and Requirements for Site-specificity**
- **Post-decision validation** – unit layout and field work after decision, but before implementation
- **Continued Public, Stakeholder, and Cooperating Agency Involvement and Monitoring**
## NEPA Analysis and Requirements for Site-specificity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MOST</th>
<th>site-specificity</th>
<th>LEAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location of Treatment</strong></td>
<td>Mapped</td>
<td>Mapped</td>
<td>Mapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prescriptions</strong></td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigation</strong></td>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post Decision Validation / Pre-Implementation Work

**Typical NEPA Process**
- Do Surveys Here?
  - FEIS
  - Or Here?
  - ROD
  - Or Here?
  - Implementation

- Intensive resource surveys here
- Re-survey due to changed conditions here

**Condition-based NEPA Process**
- Do Surveys Here?
  - FEIS
  - Or Here?
  - ROD
  - Or Here?
  - Implementation

- Minimal resource surveys here
- Intensive resource surveys prior to Implementation – Fresh and Focused
# Examples of Field Check-lists That Others Have Developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Checklist</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project location (legal):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of activities proposed in this phase:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the project located within the project boundary displayed in the FEIS ROD?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the restoration unit (RU) in which the project phase is located based on the FEIS ROD:</td>
<td>RU1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) How many acres have been treated by RU since the ROD was signed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) How many remaining acres are available for treatment by RU over the lifetime of the decision? (1–2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) How total many acres will this project (or task order) treat by RU?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Are the acres to be treated by RU less than remaining acres available for treatment? (3–4)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are acres proposed for treatment by RU within the limits approved by the decision?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DEIS for the Four-Forest Restoration Initiative, Coconino and Kaibab NF's
### Table 3. NEPA, NFMA, ESA, CFLR Act compliance evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Evaluation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the project within the maximum treatment acres identified in the NEPA decision?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is treatment design consistent with desired conditions, design criteria, and mitigation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are wildlife and botanical surveys, if necessary, complete? Is the action consistent with the FWS biological opinion dated ______?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are heritage surveys complete? Is the action consistent with the letter of concurrence from the AZ SHPO dated ______?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have contacts with tribal representatives been made?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are rights-of-way and land line locations in place (if applicable)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are treatments consistent with the Old Tree Implementation Plan (Section C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has the monitoring and adaptive management plan been evaluated to document compliance with law, regulation, policy, and forest plans?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have additional implementation and effectiveness monitoring needs been identified?</td>
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<tr>
<td>As required by CFLR Act, is multi-party monitoring underway?</td>
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<td>Are adaptive management actions being proposed? If so, clearly analyzed and covered by the decision made?</td>
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<td>Has the administrator checklist been completed and signed by the appropriate resource specialists?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the treatment (burn) plan completed and signed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Objectives have been developed in interdisciplinary manner and are clearly delineated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Objectives are consistent with management direction?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Objectives match those described for RU in NEPA analysis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complexity rating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do conditions match those described in NEPA analysis? Examples where conditions have changed:</td>
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<tr>
<td>New listed species in project area, New invasive species in project area; Change in regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burn/treatment plan doesn’t allow implementing design criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have issues identified in the NEPA analysis been reviewed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has a post-implementation review been completed (may be filled out after approval)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative C Only: Are treatments consistent with Large Tree Implementation Plan? (Section D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Document Name</td>
<td>Attached? Y/N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silviculture Prescriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burn Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation Safety Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife Surveys</td>
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<td>Botany Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archaeological Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitoring Results</td>
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Project Resource Specialist Review

Based on my review, the project is consistent with the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests final environmental impact statement and record of decision (FEIS/ROD) implementing the Coconino and Kaibab NFs restoration project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Resource Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife</td>
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<td>Botany</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Range</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recreation</td>
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<td>Scenery</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Archaeology and Tribal Relations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Fire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Air Quality/Smoke</td>
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<td>Lands</td>
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<td>Soils and Hydrology</td>
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<td>Silviculture</td>
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<td>Planning/NEPA</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continued Public, Stakeholder, and Cooperating Agency Involvement

- Continue public engagement and collaborative learning that occurred during planning phase
- Support continuation of cooperating agency engagement
- Demonstrate compliance with management direction specified in decision
- Conduct a transparent implementation process that keeps the public and agencies informed of and involved in treatment unit timing, design, and monitoring
- Ensure integrated engagement of IDT members, field personnel, cooperators, line officers, and the public
- Focus on shared priorities and work to resolve concerns and solve problems related to selection and implementation of LaVA treatment units
- Conduct monitoring activities, interpret and share results, adapt implementation practices to improve results and better meet project objectives.
Possible Adaptive Implementation and Monitoring Process

1. Consult FEIS/ROD for direction on treatment priorities, design features, and other implementation parameters

2. Delineate treatment areas within FEIS parameters

3. Prepare detailed treatment plan with layout, applicable design features & monitoring requirements

4. Complete field surveys for treatments

5. Finalize treatment design checklist

6. Implement treatments including administration of contracts and other instruments incorporating plan requirements

7. Complete monitoring

8. Annual public/stakeholder/cooperating agency engagement of implementation activities
Medicine Bow LaVA Project Overview

• Project Boundary
• Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) and/or 2014 Farm Bill Authority
• Project Objectives and Preliminary Purpose and Need
• Analysis Process to Date: Coarse Filter Approach
• Where We’re Headed: Mid-filter Approach
• Project Timeline
HFRA or 2014 Farm Bill Amendment

The LaVA is “authorized” under Title I of the HFRA:

- Sec. 102(a)(1) - Federal land in wildland-urban interface areas;
- Sec. 102(a)(2) – Condition class 3 Federal land in proximity to municipal watersheds;
- Sec. 102(a)(3) – Condition class 2 Federal land, in fire regimes I, II, or III, in proximity to municipal watersheds;
- Sec. 102(a)(4) - Insects and disease epidemics; and
- Sec. 102(a)(5) – Federal land not covered by 1 – 4 containing threatened and endangered species habitat.

Portions of the LaVA are also authorized under the HFRA, Title VI (Section 8204, 2014 Farm Bill Amendment) - Section 602(d) – Designation of Treatment Areas

Entire area may be authorized in the near future.
Project Objectives

• Identify strategies to best mitigate the negative effects of the bark beetle epidemics on the Snowy Range and Sierra Madre mountain ranges.

• Use tree cutting and/or prescribed burning to:
  - make areas more resilient to future disturbance
  - Reduce fire hazards to communities and high-value resources; and
  - Provide a sustainable supply of wood and biomass consistent with sound forest management

• Accelerate the pace of forest restoration using innovative NEPA approaches and strong collaborative relationships
Preliminary Purpose and Need

**Project Purpose:** To respond to declining forest conditions presented by the bark beetle epidemic by actively managing forest vegetation using tree cutting and/or prescribed burning, consistent with the goals outlined in the Governor’s Task Force on Forests (Final Report, 2015), the Western Bark Beetle Strategy (July 2011), and the Wyoming Statewide Forest Resource Strategy (2010). These goals include promoting recovery from the insect infestations, improving the resiliency of green stands to future disturbances, helping to protect forested areas on adjacent private and state land, and providing for human safety. These general goals will be adapted to local landscapes where treatments are needed based on Forest Plan direction, foreseeable conditions, and local environmental, social, and economic concerns.
Preliminary Purpose and Need (Cont’d)

Project Needs:

Enhance Forest Resiliency:
• Increase age class, structural, and tree species diversity to create multi-storied stand conditions of spruce-fir;
• Reduce the continuity of dead lodgepole pine, thereby increasing heterogeneity across the landscape; and
• Promote aspen regeneration to improve habitat conditions and loss of species diversity for wildlife.

Provide for Human Safety:
• Remove hazard trees in areas not covered by the Forest-wide Hazard Tree Decision Notice (August 12, 2008);
• Remove hazard trees within and outside the wildland urban interface (WUI);
• Increase the extent of defensible space around values at risk; and
• Provide safer locations from which firefighters can initiate fire management actions.

Provide for Protection of Infrastructure, Municipal Water Supplies, and TES Habitat:
• Remove hazard trees adjacent to fences, ditches, and other linear features;
• Manage hazardous fuel loadings adjacent to municipal water supplies; and
• Remove hazardous fuels where fire is identified as a threat to the habitat of a threatened species.

Mitigate Hazardous Fuel Loading:
• Remove and/or redistribute hazardous fuels to minimize the potential for large, high intensity/high severity wildfires; and
• Remove hazardous fuels to reduce fire behavior and the possibility of fires spreading onto adjacent, non-federal lands.

Provide for Recovery of Forest Products by:
• Promote vegetation management to recover merchantable products and to accelerate recovery and regeneration of forest stands; and
• Provide commercial forest products to local dependent industries at a level commensurate with Forest Plan direction and in harmony with other Forest Plan goals.
Analysis Process to Date: Coarse Filter Approach

Objective: To determine the scope and scale of treatment opportunity area (TOA)

- **Forest Plan direction**
  - No mechanical treatment in Wilderness Areas, Research Natural Areas, Special Interest Areas, and Mapped and Inventoried Old Growth in Management Area (MA) 5.15 (Ecological Restoration)
  - No prescribed fire in Old Growth in MA 5.15

- **Law, regulation, and policy**
  - HFRA – no treatments of any kind in Wilderness Areas or Congressionally designated areas.

- **Administrative index of acceptable risk (i.e., Dennis’s comfort level)**
  - No treatments of any kind in MA 1.2 (Recommended Wilderness)
  - Need strong justification for treatments in Inventoried Roadless Areas
  - Need strong justification for treating mapped and inventoried Old Growth outside of MA 5.15
Landscape Vegetation Analysis Treatment Opportunity Map

Mechanical Treatment

Legend:
- LaVA Analysis Area
- Mechanical Treatment Opportunity Areas
- Areas Excluded from Treatment Opportunity
- Strong Justification Needed for Treatment in These Areas (Inventoried Roadless Areas & Old Growth > MA 5.13)
- National Forest Lands not Included in LaVA Analysis
- State Lands within LaVA Analysis Area
- Private Lands within LaVA Analysis Area
- BLM – National System of Public Lands
- Lakes/Reservoirs Larger Than 100 Acres
Where We’re Headed: Mid-filter Approach

- **Forest Plan direction**
  - Standards and Guidelines
  - Desired Conditions
- **Law, regulation, and policy**
  - Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment and Lynx Analysis Units
  - Executive Orders
- **Past Management Activities**
- **Determining Appropriate Models to use**
  - Hydrology: Equivalent Clearcut Acres v. Equivalent Roaded Areas
  - LANDFIRE data, FireFamilyPlus, and FLAMMAP
- **Updating/Validating Existing Databases**
  - FSVeg Spatial
  - FACTS
**OPPORTUNITIES**  
*(e.g., CARs, Cheyenne Municipal Watershed Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Assessment)*

- Places we want to work
- Places we can work
- Places where we should work
- Most important places to work
- Goals we want to work toward
- Tools we can use in those places

**CONSTRAINTS (i.e., FILTERS)**  
*(e.g., LAUs, Hydrologic Cumulative Effects, Transportation System)*

- Places we can’t work *(Coarse)*
- Places we don’t have support to work
- Places social license is still needed
- Limitations on access/distribution
- Tradeoffs and conflicting goals
- Limitations on using certain tools

Projects  
Partnerships  

Need to determine where the appropriate place is for this line to exist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Accelerated Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refine Proposed Action and Purpose and Need</td>
<td>January - March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- GIS Analyses/Mapping Needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Data/Personnel Gaps</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Define Preliminary Treatment Opportunity Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Preliminary Design Criteria/BMPs/Mitigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Develop Public Involvement Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoping</td>
<td>April 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Public Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cooperator Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Analysis and Alternative Review/Development</td>
<td>May/June 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Opportunity Area (TOA) Field Review</td>
<td>July/August 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Verify assumptions used to identify TOAs;</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Verify assumptions used to identify proposed treatment parameters (e.g., levels of treatment; types of actions to propose (e.g., salvage, WUI protection; habitat protection); tools that might be used (e.g., mastication, burning, timber prescriptions))</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis and Specialist Reports</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal Comment Period (45-days)</td>
<td>Nov./early Dec. 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Public Meetings</td>
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<td>- Cooperator Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Analysis/Response to Comments</td>
<td>January/February 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final EIS / draft Record of Decision / HFRA Objection Period (30-day)</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objection Resolution (30-day)</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signed Decision / Implementation</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Let’s Take a Break!