

State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
Coastal Region
Kenai / Kodiak Area

Final Decision
Best Interest Finding
Forest Land Use Plan
Jerome Timber Sale SC-3112K
October 2013



Jerome Timber Sale
 SC-3112K
 Final Decision
 Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

I. INTRODUCTION.....3
 A. Purpose3
 B. Objectives.....3
 C. Five Year Schedule:3
 D. Location:.....3
 E. Title, Classification and Other Active or Pending Interests:4
 II. LEGAL AUTHORITY5
 III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD5
 IV. DESCRIPTION OF SALE AREA5
 Physical characteristics of the sale area5
 Topography and Soils.....5
 Waterbodies.....5
 Wildfire Potential and Fuels Mitigation6
 B. Wildlife Habitat6
 Bears.....6
 Moose.....7
 Other Fur Bearers7
 Birds8
 Fish Habitat8
 C. Human activity and social considerations8
 Hunting.....8
 Subsistence8
 Recreation9
 Scenic9
 D. Sustained yield and allowable cut9
 E. Silviculture and Timber Harvest.....9
 F. Transportation.....10
 G. Erosion11
 H. Mining.....11
 I. Materials11
 V. MARKET CONDITIONS AND ECONOMICS.....11
 VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS11
 Abbreviations.....14
 References Cited15
 Links to Planning Documents:16
 Comments & Responses19

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Kenai-Kodiak Area is offering for sale an estimated 1.5 million board feet (MMBF) or 4800 cords, of mixed spruce and hemlock by competitive sealed bids. The sale is designed to minimize impacts on visual quality, recreation, tourism, water quality, wildlife resources, and fisheries. The Jerome Timber Sale consists of two harvest units totaling approximately 300 acres. Timber harvest will entail overstory removal of mature spruce and mountain hemlock leaving reserves of live trees to provide seed and wildlife cover. Harvesting stands in this manner is expected to produce early successional vegetation types consisting of willow, hardwoods, and eventually regenerating conifers. This is expected to increase moose browse. The long-term silvicultural objective will be a varied age structure for the spruce and hemlock stands.

The State may offer this as one sale or divide and sell it into smaller sales. The contract period for any sale will be less than 3 years.

B. Objectives

The primary objectives of this timber sale are to:

1. To accelerate reforestation: harvesting timber is a means of preparing the area for new trees to establish. This proposal helps meet the Division’s statutory responsibility to provide “...sound forest practices necessary to ensure the continuous growing and harvesting of commercial forest species on ...state land.”
2. To follow DNR’s constitutional mandate to encourage the development of the state's renewable resources, making these resources available for maximum use consistent with the public interest. Firewood is the primary product of this sale, and therefore parallels the publics’ increasing firewood demand.
3. To manage timber for decreased fire risk and improve stand composition for wildlife habitat.

C. Five Year Schedule:

The Jerome Timber Sale is currently listed in the last edition of the Five Year Timber Sale Schedule 2014 - 2018.

D. Location:

The legal description of this proposed action is as follows: Sections 10 and 11 Township 5 North Range 2 West Seward Meridian. Cooper Landing is the nearest community, and is located about 5 miles southwest of the timber sale. Federal and Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) lands are adjacent to the timber sale. There are no regional or village native corporation land ownerships within 50 miles of the sale area. This sale can be located on the United States Geological Survey 1:63360 Quadrangle maps titled Seward C-7.

E. Title, Classification and Other Active or Pending Interests:

The State received title to the lands proposed in this action under the following general grant patents: 6, 1227030 dated 5/23/62, 1217412 dated 2/27/61, & 1217604 dated 3/6/61; 1198, 1235445 dated 3/11/64 & 1232380 dated 6/21/63; and 107, 1232404 dated 6/25/63 and 1235379 dated 3/6/64.

F. Planning Framework

The decision to offer the Jerome Timber Sale was based on a long series of planning decisions, made with public and agency input every step of the way. This document, the Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the timber sale, is one of the final steps in this long planning process. The planning for where timber harvest is appropriate, and where it is not appropriate, is done at a much broader scale than the FLUP. The framework for how management decisions are made for timber sales on the Kenai Peninsula is as follows:

1. Area plans, management plans, and land use plans (in this case, the *Kenai Area Plan*) determine where timber harvesting is allowed.
2. The Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations, and the Alaska Forest Management Statutes & Regulations determine how timber will be managed within areas where harvesting is allowed by the area plan.
3. The Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales proposes when timber sales will be offered, and approximately where and how big each sale will be.
4. Next, a Forest Land Use Plan is written for each individual sale, which contains more detailed decisions about each sale.

Both the area plan and the management plan processes openly reviewed resource information and public concerns prior to making long-range decisions about public land management. The planning processes determined how the complete range of uses would be accommodated in the proposed sale area, including opportunities for forestry, as well as protecting fish and wildlife habitat, opportunities for recreation, and the whole range of other uses. This document's decision to conduct a timber harvest in the area is developed based on the Kenai Area Plan's designation for this particular area that allows for timber harvest.

Next, the Division of Forestry prepares a Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) every other year. The FYSTS gives the public, timber industry, and other agencies an overview of the division's plans for timber sales. They summarize information on proposed timber harvest areas, timber sale access, and reforestation plans. Five-Year Schedules are subject to public and agency review. The review helps identify issues that must be addressed in detailed timber sale planning. After review and revision, DNR uses the schedules to decide how and where to proceed with timber sale planning.

Finally, the Best Interest Finding and Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) is prepared. The FLUP presents detailed information on the location, access, harvest methods, duration, and proposed reforestation for each sale. The public is asked to comment at this stage, as well. By getting the best available data, combined with a series of public processes that helps us gather information from the public and other agencies, we make well-informed decisions about uses of resources on state land.

II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The department is taking this action under the authority of AS 38.05.035(e) (Best Interest Finding); AS 38.05.110-120; 11 AAC 71 (timber sale statutes and regulations); AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices statutes and regulations).

III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The division will maintain an administrative record regarding the decision of whether or not to offer timber within the Jerome Timber Sale. This record will be maintained at the Kenai-Kodiak Area Office and filed as SC-3112 K.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF SALE AREA

Physical characteristics of the sale area

Topography and Soils

The Jerome Timber Sale is situated within a geographical area that is characterized by level to gently rolling terrain. Slopes within the proposed sale area vary from 5 to 12% grade with north, east and northwest aspects. The elevation ranges between 960 to 1300 feet.

The soils of the forested, ice-scoured land type have formed on glacial till deposits over bedrock, usually greater than 50 cm deep. The soils are deep and well drained. The surface soil has a light sandy loam to silt loam texture with heavy organics. The subsoil has loamy sand to sandy loam texture with 5 to 15 percent gravel and about 5 percent cobbles.

Given the topography and soil types described above, logging and road construction is not expected to promote mass wasting or soil erosion. Moreover, timber harvest activities will be subject to slope stability requirements under the Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Regulations.

Waterbodies

Jerome Creek and Quartz Creek are both located north and west of the sale area. Both of these streams are catalogued by the Department of Fish & Game as anadromous fish habitat. Tributaries of either of these streams will be excluded from harvest units as a means of providing protection of water quality and fish habitat as required under the Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Act and the Regulations.

Timber Stand Conditions

Most of the stands are a mix of spruce and mountain hemlock. Mature hemlock stands in the vicinity of the Seward Highway were estimated to contain a maximum of 9,490 board feet per acre, (DOF, 2012). White spruce and Sitka spruce cross breed creating a hybrid known as Lutz spruce, *P. Lutzii*. Mature mountain hemlock comprise the largest diameter and are the largest trees in the sale area. Most of the large mature spruce have been dead for several years from bark beetle infestations. However, the number of mature spruce in the sale area is low in comparison to other Lutz Spruce stands on the Kenai Peninsula. Likewise, the number of beetle-killed spruce per acre is low. As the availability of dead spruce declines due to local firewood consumption, hemlock is the next available species to serve that purpose.

Birch trees are few and widely scattered. Trees mature enough to produce seed show signs of poor vigor with broken limbs. There appears to be frequent browsing by moose; which inhibits their growth and bole development.

Natural spruce regeneration occurs when there is an adequate supply of viable seed and an appropriate seedbed (INFEST #9). Often what has occurred in unmanaged stands is a significant influx of grass and a lack of an appropriate seedbed for tree regeneration. Light levels of bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) are present throughout the area and increasing in locations receiving additional sunlight from the loss of canopy cover.

The plant community is Sitka/Lutz spruce/bunchberry dogwood, moss and mountain hemlock/blueberry. The major understory species are bracken fern, bunchberry dogwood, moss, rusty menziesia, blueberry and alder. Devils club is found in patches although the largest patches are uphill from the units. Grass cover is light in most places.

Wildfire Potential and Fuels Mitigation

Dead spruce are the primary wildfire concern. Based on field observations, the largest spruce—once comprising the overstory--have died and blown over. Dead and down trees concentrate fire fuels, making them more prone to high intensity fires. Removal of dead spruce within the sale area is consistent with continuing hazardous fuels mitigation efforts on the Kenai Peninsula on State land. There remains a viable local firewood market for dead since the wood is readily available for burning.

B. Wildlife Habitat

The effects of the harvest activity will vary depending on species. Wildlife species that prefer mature and over-mature spruce stands may either be displaced or decline in numbers. Species that prefer the grass-forb successional stage will likely become more abundant. The prescribed harvest method is intended to leave clearings surrounded by reserves. The reserves are expected to provide seed for the harvested sites. The mix of clearings and retained timber may also create improved habitat for wildlife that prefer varied types of forest cover.

Bears

For black bear, the proposed timber sale includes areas with potential late summer and early fall berry crops. No brown or black bear denning sites were found during field reviews or have been reported to the Division of Forestry.

In 2010, the US Forest Service and the US Fish & Wildlife Service conducted a census for brown bears on the Kenai Peninsula. The result of the census was an estimate of 624 bears (USFS/USFWS 2012).

Increased vulnerability of local black bear populations to hunting is a function of road location and road density which, in turn, is related to the timber harvesting systems used and the level of logging activity (DF&G 1994). There are two all-season roads that could be used to access the sale area; they extend from the Seward Highway near Mile 38. These roads are gated on Forest Service land, which restricts un-authorized vehicle access.

However, increased access associated with resource development is of concern to wildlife managers (Selinger, 2005). Logging roads may cause behavioral changes with the bear population. Although

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

evidence suggests that road avoidance behavior and habitat loss leads to changes in wildlife productivity and survivorship, there is little data currently available to support this hypothesis (Frederick 1991). Again, this proposed sale will be accessed by roads that are only drivable during the winter months, when bear activity is expected to be minimal. These actions are intended to closely align with the recommendations of the Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Conservation Strategy (DF&G 2000).

This timber sale may impact the home range of resident bears. However, research suggests that home ranges for brown bears can cover tens to hundreds of square miles and because of this variability; the concept of home range size is not very useful (DF&G 2000).

The availability of security cover is considered important in how brown bears are influenced by human activities. Brown bears are at least twice as likely to be displaced from open areas where they can see or be seen by humans (Suring 1998). The road leading into the sale area is gated. The harvested portion of the timber sale will provide little cover for bears until the regeneration reaches an adequate height. As recommended in the Kenai Area Plan, reserves of unharvested timber will be retained for cover.

Given the relatively remoteness of the sale area from permanent settlement, bear/human conflicts are expected to be less than the more heavily populated portions of the Kenai Peninsula.

Moose

As the dead spruce fall to the ground, escape routes will diminish and it is likely that energy expenditure by newborn moose for escape will be increased. The increase over time in the amount of deadfall that will occur without intervention will also decrease sight distance that may result in additional predation of young moose. The increasing amount of deadfall and debris on the forest floor could limit access to preferred foraging areas and limit mobility during critical times of the year for moose (DF&G 1994). DF&G (2003) notes that increasing deadfall over time will make moose travel through these areas more difficult. Slash depths of 1 to 2.3 feet reduced forage production and hindered access for many wildlife species (Bartels 1985).

Harvesting the spruce and hemlock is expected to return sites to early successional mixtures of hardwoods and conifers. The increased hardwoods will increase available browse for moose.

Cover is more important in summer conditions; moose have an efficient way of keeping warm in severe weather but are less efficient in moderating the effects of high summer temperatures that can cause them to overheat (INFEST #6). The buffers along the muskeg will provide some cover, but the harvested areas will not provide shading and calving areas.

Other Fur Bearers

Timber harvest activities are expected to impact the habitat for ermines, mink, and river otters by reducing cover or abundance of available prey. By retaining timber in selected portions of the sale area, the above-mentioned impacts will be offset.

Lynx occur throughout the general area. Lynx will use early successional habitats resulting from timber cutting, but require proximity to mature mixed forests (DF&G 1994).

Snowshoe hares are apparently increasing numbers in proximity to the sale area. This species is subject to population rises, followed by abrupt declines. As to when this when the population will decline is

unknown, but will probably be associated with other factors than the impacts of timber harvest. During peak population cycles, hares browsing can cause significant reduction in young tree development.

Similarly, the proposed prescription for harvest will reduce squirrel numbers, but populations will likely remain intact, though at lower densities than prior to timber harvest (DF&G 1994). Ground cover and security from raptors will likely increase with the reforestation practices that are being incorporated.

Birds

The loss of canopy will result in increased mortality from predation because of more visible nests and loss of protection from inclement weather (DF&G 1994). Leave areas will help to offset this loss to the extent that they are useful. Scarification, where feasible and quick reforestation efforts will help to create more suitable habitat conditions in a shorter period of time than if left in an unmanaged condition.

Larger diameter birch, aspen, and cottonwood trees are more important than spruce for cavity nesters, however, there is very few birch within the timber sale and no aspen or cottonwood trees.

The potential effects from a timber harvest on cavity-nesting and other non-game birds will be the shortage of suitable nesting trees, which could result in lower numbers of birds. The conversion of sites to early successional stages could result in a shift in bird species composition to favor birds that prefer grass, shrub/forb, and sapling habitats (DF&G 1994).

Fish Habitat

The nearest anadromous and high value resident fish water bodies are Quartz Creek is located about 1 mile northeast of the timber sale at its nearest point, and Jerome Creek located approximately 1200 feet from the sale area. Quartz Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook and Coho salmon, and Dolly Varden and Steelhead trout. Jerome Creek is habitat for rainbow trout and Dolly Varden. No tributaries for either of these streams have been found within harvest units. The existing Forest Service road to be used as initial sale area access crosses Jerome Creek with a culvert.

Timber harvest and road construction will be subject to fish habitat protection requirements of the Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Act and the Regulations.

C. Human activity and social considerations

Hunting

Based on field observations, the area is hunted primarily by local residents; hunting pressure is not expected to increase in the area as a result of timber harvest.

Subsistence

The subject area has not been designated as a subsistence zone.

There are the following possible subsistence uses in the area: trapping, hunting and gathering of berries. The effects of timber harvest on wildlife species of interest to both trapping and hunting are detailed above in the two wildlife sections. Most of the *Vaccinium* species prefer open forest conditions, which would tend to indicate that the berry crops might do well as the stands open up. The berry crop will not

be significantly affected by the proposed treatment, since these species did not appear to be abundant in close proximity to stands of large timber.

Recreation

Based on field observations, there appears to be intermittent recreation presumably by local residents. Generalized use of ATV's was evident in the area. The area may be used for moose hunting in the fall, but there was no evidence of any established camps or recreational use sites. This area is not known to have unique tourism values. At this time, there are no commercial recreation operations that use this area.

Cultural Resources

Currently, there no reports of cultural or historical sites in the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey within the sale area (DNR/ Parks, AHRS, 2012). The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (**AHRS**) is an inventory of all reported historic, prehistoric, and paleontological sites within the State of Alaska. The AHRS will be examined for updated information regarding the sale area prior to advertising this timber sale.

Under the Alaska Historic Preservation Act (41.35.200), all burials on state land are protected. If burials or human remains are found, all land-altering activities that would disturb the burial or remains shall cease and measures will be taken to protect it in place. The Office of History and Archaeology and a law enforcement officer will be notified immediately to ensure that proper procedures for dealing with human remains are followed.

Scenic

Harvest areas will not be visible from the Sterling Highway or the Seward Highway. Timber harvest will be visible from aircraft, snowmobiles, and ATVs. Residents and visitors to Alaska consistently rated forest vistas damaged by spruce beetles lower in scenic beauty, and the more tree mortality present the lower the perceived scenic beauty.

Land Use

Additionally, the area has been used by the DOF as a personal use house logs area for the last three decades. These activities along with limited recreational use noted above are the primary uses of the area. No agricultural use or grazing is known to occur.

D. Sustained yield and allowable cut

This proposal complies with sustained yield/allowable cut principles outlined in the Kenai-Kodiak Area's Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales for 2014 through 2018.

E. Silviculture and Timber Harvest

The silvicultural prescription selected for spruce in this sale is salvage harvest, while keeping green reserves. All merchantable dead or infested spruce will be removed. Live spruce greater than 9 inches diameter at breast height will be allowed for harvest. After harvest, the expected stand will consist of multi-age spruce, due to the seedlings and pole-sized trees left in the stand. Birch trees will be allowed for harvest at the discretion of the state.

Mountain Hemlock stands will be harvested with a seed tree method in which patches of mature trees will be harvested, leaving adjacent concentrations of hemlock to provide seed. Non-merchantable trees

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

will be retained and protected from damage to the extent feasible. The intent of the seed tree harvest method is to promote natural regeneration. The residual trees combined with regenerating seedlings are expected to produce stands with a varied age structure. Wildlife cover and nesting habitat will be expected benefits provided by the retained timber.

Logging will not be authorized during spring break-up, which usually occurs during a period from April to June 1. The length of time to complete the harvest operations will be three years. The contract will require that care be taken to minimize damage to residual trees.

Delimbed tops will be re-scattered and allowed to decompose or will be burned. Some piles will be retained for their wildlife values. Large amounts of nutrients such as phosphorous, nitrogen, and to a lesser extent for other mineral elements, are stored in the foliage, twigs, and branches; smaller amounts are in the main trunk of the tree (Bartels 1985). This material (limbs, twigs, and needles) is an important source of nutrients for the next stand of trees; typically over 95% of the nitrogen is contained within this material (Perry, et. al. 1989). Disposal of green or infested spruce material larger than five inches in diameter shall be in accordance with the standards set in 11 AAC 95.195(b) of the Forest Practices Regulations. Stump heights will be kept as low as feasible, typically less than eighteen inches.

The State will conduct regeneration surveys within 2 years following harvest to determine if artificial regeneration will be necessary. Planting may be necessary on sites lacking sufficient regeneration to meet stocking standards. Planted spruce seedlings will be grown from locally collected seed. This proposal may be adjusted post-harvest depending on the success in protecting residual seedlings and saplings.

Regeneration surveys will monitor trends of survival and species composition and also help to determine if artificial reforestation is required to meet the reforestation requirements of the Forest Resources & Practices Regulations (11 AAC 95.375).

F. Transportation

The primary access to the timber sale is from the Seward Highway near Mile 32, approximately 2 miles north of the Seward Highway/Sterling Highway junction. Access across state lands developed to harvest timber within this sale will only be what is necessary to facilitate removal of timber. No permanent roads will be developed. Roads will be constructed to minimize impacts and protect water and upland resources while achieving the forest management objectives. The temporary road will be a combination of winter road across frozen bogs and upland areas constructed of native material to State standards. The access roads in the attached maps for this sale were drawn within public right-of-ways. All roads constructed for the purpose of accessing this timber sale will be approved by the Division of Forestry.

As determined by the Division of Forestry, the purchasers will be required to close roads on state lands at the conclusion of their sale. The temporary roads on state land that are put to bed upon completion of use will be closed in accordance with the Forest Resources & Practices Regulations on road closure (11 AAC 95.320). Additionally, wood debris will be spread over a portion of the road bed to minimize future impacts of all terrain vehicles.

G. Erosion

This proposed sale is on relatively flat terrain; the overall slope is less than ten percent grade. Roads will be constructed after the ground has frozen and there is an adequate snow layer to construct ice roads. Therefore, no slope failures or soil movement is expected.

H. Mining

There are active mining claims located to the north and west of the proposed sale area (see comments, T. Winter, 2013).

I. Materials

This proposed harvest will not preclude future development of a material site. Needed borrow material for the timber sale road(s) will be minimal and acquired from within the right of way. No pits will be developed.

V. MARKET CONDITIONS AND ECONOMICS

The local market includes domestic sawlogs, house logs and firewood. Most of the timber from this sale area will probably be sold and utilized as firewood. As heating oil prices rose within the last 5 years, the demand for firewood increased in kind, and is expected to continue. As dead spruce is consumed for firewood, hemlock may be the most viable firewood alternative, especially in Seward and communities along the Seward Highway. Firewood will likely be in greater public demand than either sawlogs or house logs in the near future. The DOF anticipates this sale to be marketable based on past sale activity.

VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

After a review of the material and information discussed above, the following alternatives have been considered:

- 1. Offer a timber sale as outline in this Forest Land Use Plan.** This alternative meets the objectives of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales and one of DNR's mandates to make the state's renewable resources available for public use. It also meets the silvicultural objective of improving forest vigor, provides for a value-added end product and creates additional local jobs due to the combination of road building, logging, and trucking.
- 2. Offer this timber sale at another time.** We believe that postponing the harvest of timber within this proposed sale is not in the public interest. Without these sales, timber operators will have a diminished source of timber for local consumption. As the dead trees continue to decay, their merchantability for multiple products will decline; therefore it is important to provide opportunities to utilize a resource that currently is in high public demand—firewood.

Additionally, the increasing fuel loading as a result of the dead trees is not in the public's interest. Trees that would otherwise be salvaged would become sources for ignition and fuel loading for a potential catastrophic wildland fire. This timber block is located in the wildland-urban interface and is a high priority for removal of potentially hazardous fuels. Additionally, postponing the sales to a later date could result in sufficient loss of market value and the sale could become uneconomical to operate.

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

3. **Modify the Sale by making the harvest units smaller.** This sale is intended to be large enough to be economically viable for mechanical logging methods. Increasing the size of the harvest unit will eliminate the surrounding no-harvest buffers which are intended to provide visual cover for wildlife. Decreasing the size of the sale area will reduce the supply of firewood and leave more timber to further deteriorate on the site and exacerbate the wildfire fuel loading. This sale is large enough to cover the costs of constructing access roads and cover the mobilization costs to operate in the Cooper Landing area under historic conditions. This sale is appropriately balanced to maintain other resource values as well as provide economic benefits to the Kenai Peninsula.

4. **Do not offer this timber sale.** This alternative would result in not meeting any of the objectives outlined for this management action. Utilization of the forest resource would not be achieved. There would be no significant contribution to the state and local economies. This alternative would delay the management objectives planned for the area, would deny making a source of raw materials available to the local wood products industry, and would delay the harvest of dead trees, mature trees, disease infected trees.

VII. BEST INTEREST FINDING

The purpose of this decision is to determine if the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, will make available timber located in portions of Sections 10 and 11 Township 5 North Range 2 West Seward Meridian.


After due consideration of all pertinent information and alternatives, the Division of Forestry has reached the following **Final Decision: To offer the sale as proposed in Alternative 1.** The Division of Forestry finds that this final decision satisfies the objectives as stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action under its authority of AS 38.05.035(c) and AS 38.05.120.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

A person affected by this decision who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony on this decision may appeal it, in accordance with 11 AAC 02. Any appeal must be received by December 30, 2013 and may be mailed or delivered to Joe Balash, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1400, Anchorage, Alaska 99501; faxed to 1-907-269-8918, or sent by electronic mail to <mailto:dnr.appeals@alaska.gov>. If no appeal is filed by that date, this decision goes into effect as a final order and decision on January 9, 2014. An eligible person must first appeal this decision in accordance with 11 AAC 02 before appealing this decision to Superior Court. If you have any questions, please contact Hans Rinke at the Kenai / Kodiak Area Office at (907) 260-4200 or e-mail hans.rinke@alaska.gov.

Failure of the commissioner to act on a request for reconsideration within 30 days after issuance of this decision is a denial of reconsideration and is final administrative order and decision for the purposes of an appeal to Superior Court. The decision may be appealed to Superior Court within a further 30 days in accordance with the rules of the court, and to the extent permitted by applicable law. An eligible person must first request reconsideration of this decision in accordance with 11 AAC 02 before appealing this decision to Superior Court. A copy of 11 AAC 02 may be obtained from any regional information office of the Department of Natural Resources.

If you have any questions, please contact Hans Rinke Kenai-Kodiak Area Forester at (907) 260-4200 or by e-mail hans.rinke@alaska.gov.



Michael Curran
Coastal Regional Forester

12-5-13
Date

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

Abbreviations

ADFG: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
AHRs: Alaska Heritage Resources Survey
BMPs: Best Management Practices
DBH: diameter at breast height
DEC: Department of Environmental Conservation
DLP: Defense of Life and Property
DNR: Department of Natural Resources
DOF: Division of Forestry
FF: Final Finding (Forest Land Use Plan)
FLUP: Forest Land Use Plan
FRPA: Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
FYSTS: Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales
KAP: Kenai Area Plan
ORV: off-road vehicle
PD: Preliminary Decision (Forest Land Use Plan)
SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

References Cited

Bartels, R., 1985. Dead and downed woody material. Management of wildlife and fish habitats in forests of western Oregon and Washington, USDA, Forest Service, Pacific NW Region.

Collins, William B. 1995, Cover (unpublished) DF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation

Daniel, Terry C., John Hetherington, Brian Orland, and Jeanine L. Paschke 1991. Public Perception and Attitudes Regarding Spruce Bark Beetle Damage to Forest Resources on the Chugach National Forest, Alaska, USDA Forest Service, FPM, R10.

DF&G 1994. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Habitat and Restoration Division, Albert, Steve W. March 16, 1994. Attachment A to memorandum that describes affects of spruce beetle and harvest activities to wildlife species.

DF&G 2000. Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Conservation Strategy, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, June 2000.

DF&G 2003. Region II Briefing Book, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, January 2003.

DOF 2013. Division of Forestry Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales, 2014 - 2018

DNR Parks 2011. Division of Parks and Recreation. Alaska Heritage Resources Survey

Frederick, Glenn. 1991. Effects of Forest Roads on Grizzly Bears, Elk, and Gray Wolves: Literature reviews USDA Forest Service. Publication number R1-91-73, April 1991.

Holsten E. and R. Burnside 1997. Forest Health Protection Report R10-TP-70 Forest Health Protection Report- Forest Insect and Disease Conditions in Alaska.

Holsten E. H., Richard A. Werner, and Rob Develice. 1995. Effects of a Spruce Bark Beetle (Coleoptera: Scolytidae) Outbreak and Fire on Lutz Spruce in Alaska. *Environ. Entomol.* 24(6): 1539-1547 (1995).

INFEST #6, Forest Information Series #6, Bluejoint Reed Grass: Basic Ecological Considerations, Interagency Forest Ecology Study Team, Prepared by Tom Stephenson

INFEST #11, Forest Information Series #11, Spruce Bark Beetles and Wildlife, Interagency Forest Ecology Study Team, Prepared by Lowell Suring.

Jacobs, Michael J. 1989. An Initial Population Analysis and Management Strategy for Kenai Peninsula Brown Bears. Master Thesis, West Virginia University.

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

Lieffers, Victor J., S. Ellen Macdonald, and Edward H. Hogg, 1993. Ecology of and control strategies for *Calamagrostis canadensis* in boreal forest sites. Canadian Journal of Forest Research, Vol. 23: 2070-2077.

McLellan B.N. and D.M. Shackelton 1988. Journal of Applied Ecology. Grizzly Bears and Resource-Extraction Industries: Effects of Roads on Behavior, Habitat Use and Demography.

NRCS, 2011 Natural Resource Conservation Service, 2011;
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

Olson, T.L., R.C. Squibb, B.K. Gilbert. 1998. Brown bear diurnal activity and human use: A comparison of two salmon streams. Ursus 10:547-555.

Orland, Brian, 1997. IMLAB: Deschutes National Forest, Oregon. Projects. Western Spruce Budworm on the Deschutes National Forest Oregon. 3 October 1997

Orland, Brian, Terry C. Daniel, Jeanine L. Paschke, and John Hetherington, 1993
Visualization of Forest Management Issues on the Dixie National Forest. USDA Forest Service, Forest Pest Management, Region 4, Ogden, Utah. May 1993.

Perry, David A., R. Meurisse, B. Thomas, R. Miller, J. Boyle, J. Means, C.R. Perry, and R.F. Powers, 1989. Maintaining the Long-Term Productivity of Pacific Northwest Forest Ecosystems pgs. 17-36.

Schmid, J.M. & R.H. Frye. 1977. Spruce Beetle in the Rockies. U.S. Department. Agriculture. Forest Service General Tech. Report RM-49.

Thomas, Jack Ward. 1979. Wildlife Habitats in Managed Forests the Blue Mountains of Oregon and Washington. U.S. Dep. Of Ag. Forest Service. Agriculture Handbook No. 553, September 1979.

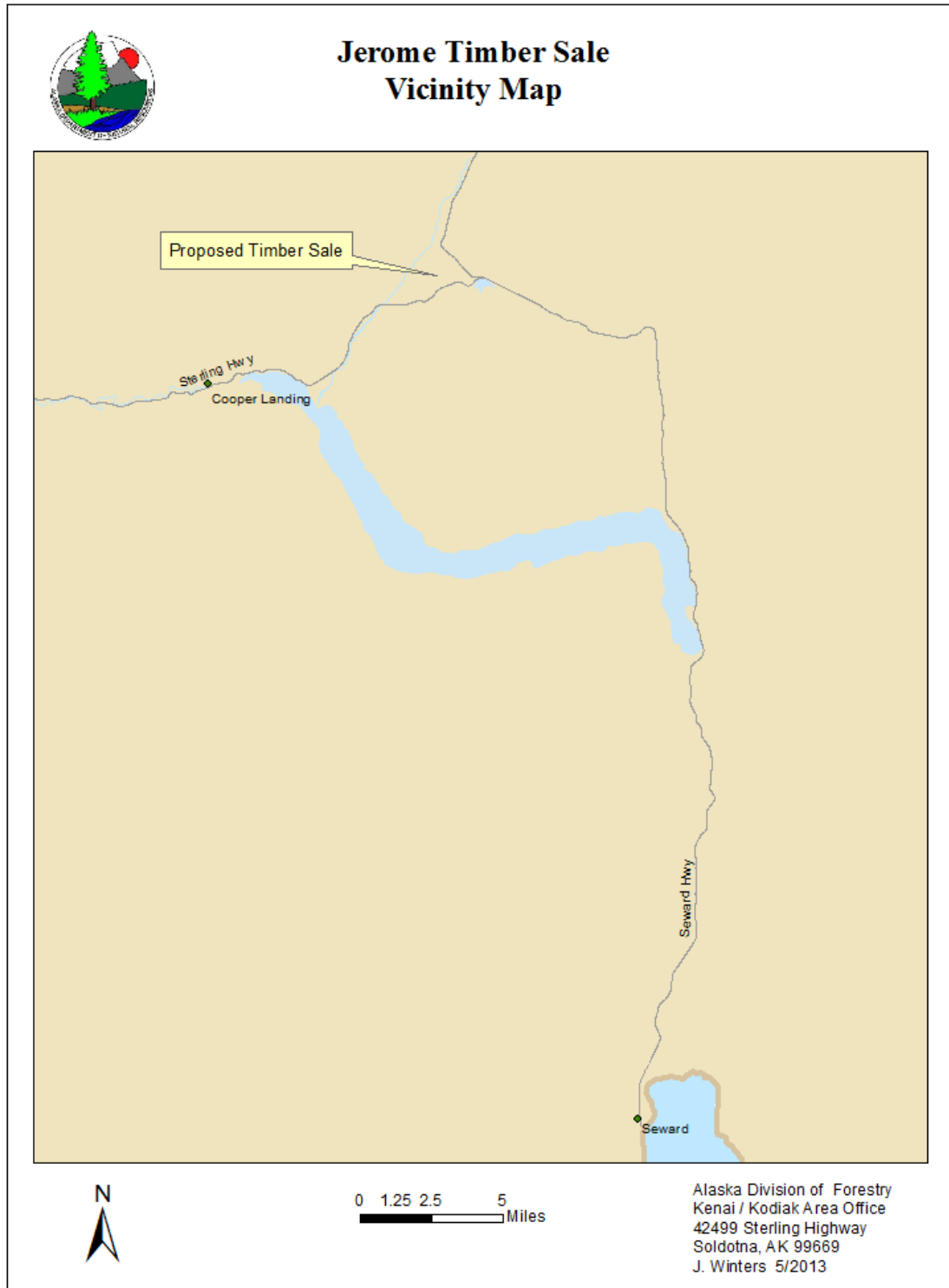
USFS/USFWS 2012. The Kenai Brown Bear Population on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and Chugach National Forest

Links to Planning Documents:

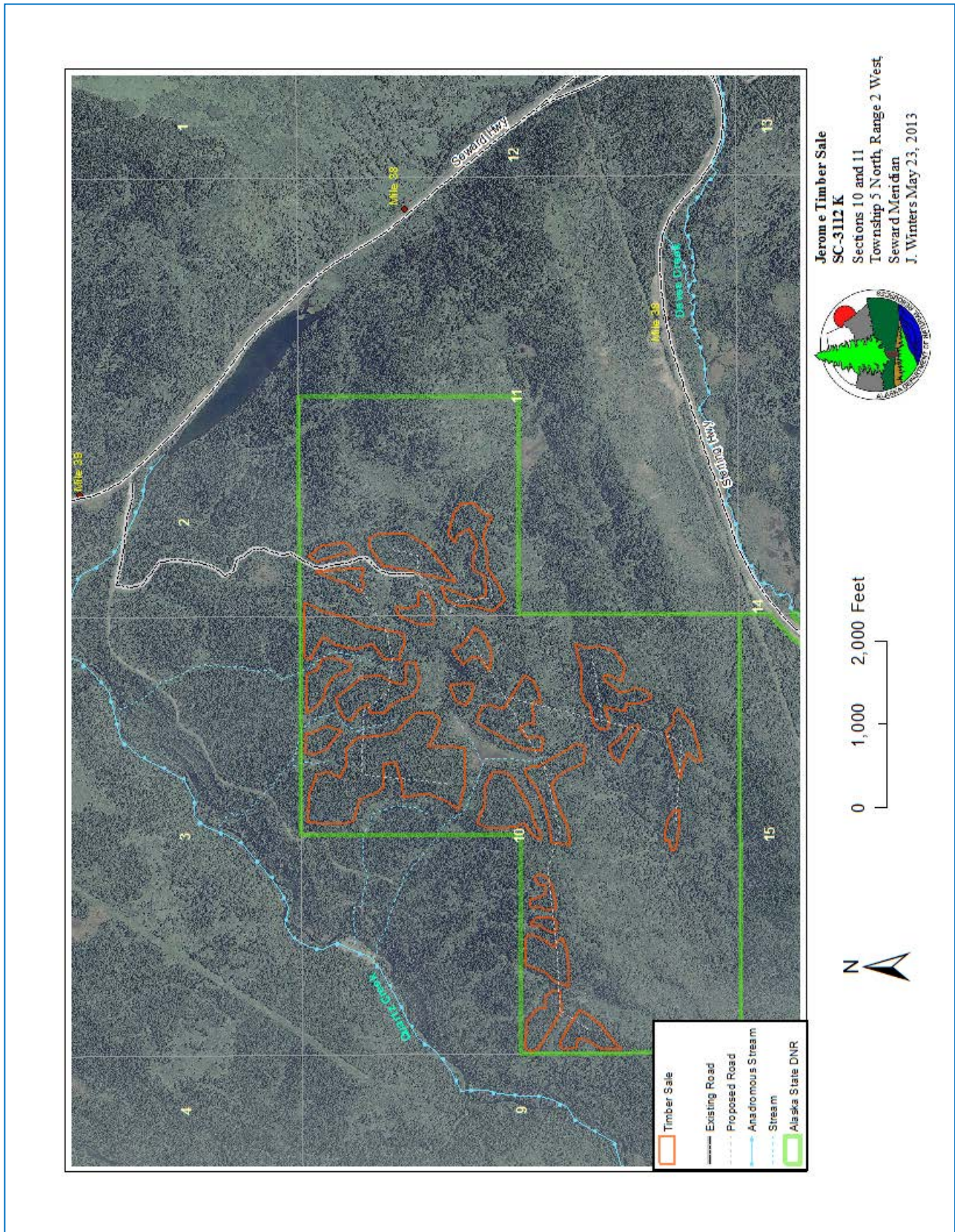
Kenai Area Plan: http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/kenai/pdfs/master_KAP.pdf

Jerome Timber Sale
SC-3112K
Final Decision
Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

Timber Sale Maps



Jerome Timber Sale
 SC-3112K
 Final Decision
 Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan



Comments & Responses

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry
November 2013

The following comments were received during the public comment period on the East Ninilchik Timber Sale.

Organization	Author	Location
Alaska Department of Fish & Game	Patti Berkhahn	Soldotna
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	Kevin Hanley	Juneau
Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Parks/State Historical Preservation Office	Mark Rollins	Anchorage
Private citizen—Mining Claim holder	Teresa Winter	Kasilof

Commenter	Comment	Response
Patti Berkhahn	I checked the map and the proposed timber sale area located on ADNR lands and the proposed project is not in a Critical Habitat Area, nor does it contain any anadromous streams. Jerome Lake is a non anadromous water body outside, but nearby, the proposed timber sale and supports native Dolly Varden and was stocked in the past by ADF&G with rainbow trout. Quartz Creek is also adjacent to but outside of the proposed area and is home to all five species of Pacific Salmon. I cannot locate any fish bearing tributaries of these waterbodies in the area.	Noted: Streams will be provided protection for water quality as required by the Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Act and the Regulations.
Kevin Hanley	Given the paucity of streams or other surface waters within the individual harvest units of these sales, we have no significant concerns for the maintenance of water quality. In addition, we trust that the road construction and stream crossing components of the sales will be done in accordance with the standards of 11 AAC 95.290(f),(g),(h), and (i), and 11 AAC 95.300(a)(5). These standards pertain to proper winter road and ice bridge construction, use, and closure techniques for the protection of water quality.	Noted. The timber sale operator will be required to build roads and harvest timber in compliance with the statutes stated in your comments.
Mark Rollins	There are no recorded AHRS sites within the proposed areas for timber harvest (South Ninilchik, East Ninilchik, & Jerome).	Noted. Any cultural artifacts or remains discovered will be protected from impacts on scene and reported to the State Historic Preservation Office

Jerome Timber Sale
 SC-3112K
 Final Decision
 Best Interest Finding / Forest Land Use Plan

Commenter	Comment	Response
Teresa Winter	<p>You can see the two claims that cross into the area, we also hold the claims adjacent to those to the east and south 8 in total. I just wanted to let you know that we are there, and actively mining. The proposal I read said there was no known mining in the area.</p> <p>We don't have a problem with this sale at all, we just want to understand what exactly this timber sale means. Will it be a commercial logging, or individuals?</p>	<p>The Division of Forestry has determined that the mining claims are not within proposed harvest units and will not be impacted by logging operations. Information about mining claims has been incorporated into this Final Decision document.</p>