

STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY  
NORTHERN REGION

Valdez/Copper River Area

FOREST LAND USE PLAN

*Mile 176 Glenn Highway Salvage*

*VCR-4078*

*ADL #231365*

July 21, 2012

Prepared by  
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## *Table of Contents*

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A. Purpose.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>B. Five-Year Sale Schedule .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>C. Location .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>D. Title, Classification and Other Active or Pending Interests .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>E. General Timber Sale Program Objectives .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. LEGAL AUTHORITY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>IV. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A. Physical Characteristic of the Sale Area.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>B. Historic and Current Land Use.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>C. Wildlife Habitat.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>D. Fisheries and Water Quality .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>E. Subsistence.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>F. Recreation and Tourism.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>G. Scenic Resources .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>H. Cultural Resources.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>I. Sustained Yield and Allowable Cut.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>J. Silvicultural Prescription .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>K. Transportation .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>L. Erosion .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>M. Mining .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>N. Materials .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>O. Economics .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>V. MARKET CONDITIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VII. PRELIMINARY FINDING AND DECISION.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) is to provide sufficient information for reviewers to ensure that the best interest of the State will be served by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Valdez/Copper River Area, in offering this proposed timber salvage sale. The sale areas are located at 176 Mile Glenn Highway; on the north and south side of the road and comprised of 6 units for 191 acres, the total FLUP area identified is 3360 acres.

Units 1, 2 & 3 (combined volume/acreage): 52 acres, containing an estimated 446 hundred cubic feet (ccf) of cordwood and 50 mbf of saw log.

Unit # 4: 17.5 acres containing an estimated 137 ccf cordwood and 17 mbf saw log.

Unit # 5: 49.5 acres containing 518 ccf of cordwood and 210 mbf saw log.

Unit # 6: 72 acres contains 3656 ccf of cordwood per acre and 60 mbf of saw log.

In addition to the commercial sales being offered 558 acres of personal use area have been identified within the FLUP area. These areas will be broken up in units and made available to the public in a sequential progression.

It will be the responsibility of the Forester-In-Charge to ensure that any purchaser of this sale harvests timber per the sale design and sale contract provisions and adheres to Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AFRPA) best management practices.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of this proposed timber sale with regards to *the Preliminary Finding and Decision (AS 38.05.035)*. Comments should be mailed to the Division of Forestry, PO Box 185, Glennallen, Alaska 99588, by emailing to [gary.mullen@alaska.gov](mailto:gary.mullen@alaska.gov), or visiting the Valdez/Copper River Area Office at Milepost 110 Richardson Highway. Comments must be received at the Division of Forestry no later than August 31, 2012 in order to be considered in the Final Decision of whether the sale will be held in whole or in part. To be eligible to appeal the final decision, a person must have provided written comment by August 31, 2012.

### **B. Five-Year Sale Schedule**

The general area that this proposed sale occupies has been referenced in Figure 4 of the Copper Basin Sustained Yield Unit shown as a potential sale area in the t Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) for Fiscal Years 2002 thru 2006 as required by AS 38.05.113.

### **C. Location**

The proposed sale is located in the Copper River Meridian in Township 4 N, Range 4 W on sections 24, 25, 35 & 36 approximately 10 miles West from Glennallen. The sale is on both the North and South sides of the Glenn Highway at Mile 176.

### **D. Title, Classification and Other Active or Pending Interests**

The acquisition for the land upon which the sale is proposed is based on General Selection. There are no Pending or Active interests on this land.

### **E. General Timber Sale Program Objectives**

- 1. Develop the State's Renewable Resources.** To follow the DNR's constitutional mandate to encourage the development of the State's renewable resources, making

them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest. Sustain and promote a healthy, long-term timber industry in the State, through providing a secure source of timber for harvest that produces raw materials for local manufacturing plants when practical while protecting other resources such as fish and wildlife.

2. **Improve the State's Economy.** To help the State's economy by providing royalties to the State in the form of stumpage receipts, as well as contributions to local economies through wages, purchases, jobs and business growth .
3. **Improve Forest Health.** To improve forest growth and vigor by harvesting and replacing mature stands and stands with declining vigor with new healthy regenerating stands, while protecting and maintaining other resource values. The actions authorized under this decision will follow the constitutional mandate of sustained yield and shall adhere to multiple use management as described in the Tanana Basin Area Plan.
4. **Improve Wildlife Habitat.** Meet the wildlife management goals for the Copper Basin Area Plan that provide for the economic development of other natural resources while protecting habitat needs of wildlife resources necessary to maintain or enhance public use and economic benefits.

## II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

This Division of Forestry is taking this action under the authority of AS 38.05.035 (e) (Best Interest Finding); AS 38.05.110-120 (Alaska Land Act Statutes); 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 case file ADL # 231107 and the Copper River Basin Area Plan constitute the administrative record for this finding.

## IV. DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

- A. **Physical Characteristic of the Sale Area**
  1. **Topography.** The sale area is generally flat with no slope.
  2. **Soils.** The sale area is located on nearly flat ground at an elevation ranging from 2000 to 2100 feet. Soils are composed of silty loam, glacial till and clay of various depths.
  3. **Waterbodies.** There are several isolated ponds within the FLUP boundaries. There are no known anadromous streams or lakes within the proposed area. However, all surface waters will be managed to riparian standards for state land under Sec.41.17.118. This sale area is intended for winter access only.
- B. **Stand Conditions.** The overall stand condition is poor. The stand consists of mixed white and black spruce with some aspen and balsam poplar. Approximately 30% of the stand is dead. A large proportion of the sale area is pole timber.
- C. **Historic and Current Land Use.** The historic uses of land in the general area have been subsistence hunting, trapping and firewood gathering.
- D. **Wildlife Habitat.** This area provides some habitat for large game animals; primarily moose, caribou, black and grizzly bears. Furbearers consist of martin, ermine, fox, coyotes and occasionally wolves. Small mammals such as hares, red squirrels and porcupines also show a presence. Spruce grouse, ruffed grouse and ptarmigan have all been seen in the

area. No critical habitat has identified in this area (CRB Plan), nor has any been observed during ground reconnaissance.

**E. Fisheries and Water Quality**

FRPA best management practices will be implemented to ensure water quality standards in all water courses. There are no fish bearing water bodies in the sale area and the edge of the sale is more than 300 feet from the Tazlina River. The closest sale unit is proximately a mile and three quarters southwest of Mud Lake.

**F. Subsistence**

This area supports limited subsistence use for moose and caribou. Caribou activity or occupancy is very seasonal and sporadic depending on where the caribou decide to winter. There is a suspected small amount of trapping within the FLUP area however, no recent evidence was found.

**G. Recreation and Tourism**

Recreation use is limited due to the lack of interest in the area and grown over tails that do not provide access to anything of local benefit. The area is occasionally used on a seasonal basis by hunters and trappers.

**H. Scenic Resources**

The units that are being designated are not visible from the Glenn Highway. The current silvicultural prescription is to remove all dead, beetle infested and live spruce down to 6 inches at breast height. There is evidence of historical subsistence cutting; this cutting has shown no effect on scenic quality.

**I. Cultural Resources**

There are no known cultural resources in this area.

**J. Sustained Yield and Allowable Cut**

The Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17.060 (c)) and Article VIII Sec. 4 of the State Constitution require that the State forest land be managed on a sustained yield basis. Sustained yield is defined in the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17.950(25)):

“Sustained Yield” means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of forest land and water without significant impairment of the productivity of the land and water, but does not require that timber be harvested in a non-declining yield basis over a rotation period.

The Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is the amount that can be harvested from forest land managed for forestry purposes in a year under sustained yield management. The AAC in the Copper Basin Sustained Yield Unit (CBSYU) is estimated to be at 1878 acres per year. The CBSYU is based on a 120-year rotation of a potential 219,549 acres of commercial forest and is in compliance with sustained yield/allowable cut principles outlined in the Forest Resources on State Forest Land in the Copper River Basin 2010. This sale complies with sustained yield/allowable cut principles outlined in the Valdez/Copper River Area Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales for FY 2002 to 2006. The AAC will not be exceeded for this proposed sale.

**K. Silvicultural Prescription**

1. Stand Silviculture.
2. Specific Management Objectives. Remove all merchantable live spruce along with all dead and infested trees while they still have commercial value. The removal of the old decadent overstory will increase soil temperature and reduce competition for soil moisture for existing regeneration. It is expected that there will be some scarification even under winter logging operations and provide a limited mineral seed bed for new generation in the harvest unit.
3. **Harvest Methods.** Ground based mechanical skidding and harvesting equipment will be utilized to harvest this unit. Merchantable timber will be skidded to and processed at centrally located sites (landing). These will be located in or adjacent to the harvest unit.
4. **Regeneration.** Natural regeneration will be relied on for reforestation on this sale. Reforestation standards are established in the FRPA under Article 5 Reforestation for Region II.

**L. Transportation**

Access routes will be maintained to the standards set out in the AFRPA.

**M. Erosion**

The probability of erosion is low due to the flat land and the fact that the harvesting will occur during winter.

**N. Mining**

There are no known mining resources in the sale area.

**O. Materials**

Two gravel approaches will be constructed; one on the North side of the Glenn Highway and one on the South. These approaches will be permitted and constructed to DOT standards. Two culverts will be installed; one on the north side and one on the south side of the highway.

**P. Economics**

In addition to generating royalties to the State's general fund, the proposed sale will create economic benefits to Glennallen and to other locations in Alaska. The business community will receive direct economic benefits from providing support services for the operators through sales of fuel, food, housing, medical and miscellaneous supplies. The sale is expected to benefit the local economy by providing jobs. It will have a positive impact on local employment by generating significant man-hours of work associated with the harvest and transportation of wood products from this sale. Additionally the public may benefit from access to additional personal use fuelwood areas.

**V. MARKET CONDITIONS**

Currently the Division of Forestry cannot keep up with the demand for commercial firewood sales. Fuel prices remain at record levels causing residents to seek alternate sources for heat. Firewood prices have doubled in the last two years and all of the commercial operators have their wood sold prior to going into the woods to harvest it.

**VI. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS**

There are 4 possible alternatives to consider for this sale. A discussion of each of the four alternatives follows:

1. **To continue the sale(s) as proposed.**

This alternative meets the objectives of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales and DNR'S constitutional mandate. It also meets the silvicultural objective of improving forest vigor, provides for a value-added end product and creates additional jobs in Alaska due to the combination of road building, logging, and trucking. This alternative also complies with the management objectives of the Copper River Basin Area Plan.

**To modify the sale(s) by making them smaller or larger.**

The proposed sale unit is a logical setting for typical commercial logging equipment in Interior Alaska. The size of the sale is designed to be large enough to be economically viable considering access development and mobilization costs and distance to processing facilities. Sales of this size are appropriately balanced to maintain other resource values as well as provide economic benefits to the Copper River Valley.

2. **Defer the sale of this timber to a later date.**

Deferring harvest to a later date would fail to meet many of the objectives of the sale program. One of the main objectives is to make State-owned timber consistently available to the timber industry.

3. **Do not offer this timber for 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, deny making a source of raw materials available to the local wood products industry, and would delay the harvest of mature trees, prior to the onset of disease or insect infestation. Decay in infected mature spruce trees results in the loss of economic value.

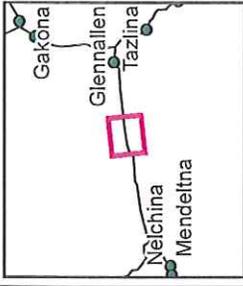
## **VII. PRELIMINARY FINDING AND DECISION**

The purpose of this decision is to determine if the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, will make available timber located in Sections 24, 25, 35 & 36 Township 4N, Range 4W in the Copper River Meridian. After due consideration of all pertinent information and alternatives, the DNR has reached the following **Preliminary Decision: To offer the sale as proposed in Alternative 1.** In addition, the DNR finds that this preliminary decision satisfies the objectives as stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action.

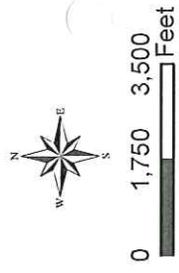
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July 21, 2012

Mile 176 Glenn Hwy  
Forest Land Use Plan



- FLUP Boundary
- Commercial #1
- Commercial #2
- Commercial #3
- Commercial #3A
- Commercial #4
- Commercial #5
- Commercial #6
- Personal Use #1
- Personal Use Proposed



Sec 13,14,23,  
24,25,26,35,36  
T4N R4W CRM



Alaska Division of Forestry  
Valdez-Copper River Area  
Glennallen, Alaska

Date: 7/14/2012

