

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**



**DIVISION OF FORESTRY
& FIRE PROTECTION**

FAIRBANKS-DELTA AREA

**PRELIMINARY BEST INTEREST FINDING
AND DECISION FOR
3 LONG TERM NEGOTIATED TIMBER SALES
NC-1971-F, NC-1972-F, NC-1973-F**

**ADL 422196, 422197, 422198
January 2024**

Contents

I.	PROPOSED ACTION.....	1
II.	STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY.....	1
III.	ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD	1
IV.	SCOPE OF DECISION	1
V.	PROJECT LOCATION, LAND STATUS, AND DESCRIPTION.....	3
A.	Location.....	3
B.	Title status.....	3
C.	Land use planning, classification, and management intent	3
D.	Current access and land use:	4
E.	Background and description of proposal	4
F.	Resources and management	8
G.	Costs and benefits.....	11
VI.	PUBLIC REVIEW.....	12
VII.	PUBLIC NOTICE	12
IX.	RECOMMENDATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION.....	12
X.	SIGNATURE	13
XI.	ATTACHMENTS	Error! Bookmark not defined.

I. PROPOSED ACTION

DOF is proposing to offer for sale approximately 4,000 acres (+ - %15) of spruce sawlogs and birch fuelwood from across State of Alaska lands within the Fairbanks management area. DOF would negotiate with Aurora Energy Solutions a 10-year timber sale high value-added processing contract. The overall volumes to be offered totals approximately 68,120 CCF or 2,929 MBF (2.9 MMBF) of spruce sawlogs and 2,635 CCF of birch fuelwood.

The management objectives for the proposed timber sales are:

- Harvest the commercial sawtimber and poletimber before significant decrease in vigor occurs.
- Return the site to a young productive mixed stand forest to include balsam poplar, birch, aspen, and white spruce.
- Provide raw timber for local business to continue to offer a source dry firewood for the community benefiting the local and State economy.
- Provide access to future commercial timber sales in the Fairbanks Management Area.

II. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Division is taking this action under the authority of

- AS 38.05.035(e) Best Interest Finding;
- AS 38.05.110-120 and 11 AAC 71, Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations; and
- 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 proceed with the action as proposed. This record will be maintained at the DOF's Fairbanks Office filed as NC-1971-F, NC-0972-F, NC-1973-F.

IV. SCOPE OF DECISION

This preliminary best interest finding (PBIF) is the first part of step two of a six-step process to design, sell, and administer timber sales. This PBIF covers the sale of approximately 4,000 (+ - %15) acres of birch fuelwood on State lands within the perimeter of the larger tracts totaling 29,440 acres (52 Sections). The following list summarizes the overall process:

Step 1: Regional planning. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) develops area plans and state forest management plans to designate appropriate uses for state land, classify the land accordingly, and establish management guidelines for multiple use. These plans determine where timber sales are an allowed use, and what other uses must be considered when

designing and implementing sales. Subsequent land use decisions must be consistent with the area plans. The majority of the lands in this PBIF are covered by the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan, with 8 Sections of State Lands classified as Forestry and managed under the Yukon-Tanana Area Plan (YTAP). The finding also considers the Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan and the FNSB Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Step 2: Best Interest Finding. A best interest finding is the decision document that:

- Ensures that the best interest of the State will be served by this proposed action,
- Establishes the overall area within which the timber sale may occur,
- Determines the amount of timber that will be offered for sale and the duration of the sale,
- Sets the overall harvest and reforestation strategy for the sale area,
- Determines whether the sale proposal complies with the Constitutional requirement to manage for sustained yield by evaluating the amount of timber in the sale and the annual allowable cut for the affected area,
- Selects the appropriate method of sale (i.e., competitive or negotiated sale), and
- Determines the appraisal method that will be used to determine the sale price.

The Preliminary Best Interest Finding (PBIF) is intended to provide sufficient information for reviewers to ensure that the best interest of the State will be served by the proposed action.

After public and agency review of the PBIF, DOF will review comments, make changes as appropriate, and issue a final best interest finding [BIF]. DOF must adopt a final BIF before selling timber. An eligible person affected by this decision, and who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony to the department, may appeal the decision to the DNR Commissioner per AS 44.37.011 and 11 AAC 02.

Step 3: Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (AS 38.05.113). The Fairbanks-Delta Area staff prepares a Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales every other year. The Schedule identifies proposed sales, including their location, volume, and main access routes. The Five-year Schedules is a scoping document that provides an opportunity for public, agency, and industry to identify potential issues and areas of interest for further consideration in the Forest Land Use Plan. Proposed timber sales within the area covered by this PBIF must appear in at least one of the two Five-year Schedules preceding the sale. Many of the proposed units are in established logging areas and are bordering or located adjacent to where prior sales have occurred. All of the proposed units will be identified in the upcoming FYSTS.

Step 4: Forest Land Use Plans (AS 38.05.112). Prior to authorizing harvest of timber on any area greater than 10 acres, the DOF must adopt a site-specific Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the harvest area. DOF will prepare FLUPs for harvest areas within the overall sale area covered by this best interest finding. FLUPs specify the site, size, timing, and harvest methods for harvest unit within the sale area. FLUPs also address site-specific requirements for access construction and maintenance, reforestation, and multiple use management. Draft FLUPs will be based on

additional field work, agency and community consultation, and site-specific analyses by the DOF, and will be subject to public and agency review.

Step 5: Timber sales and contracts. Following adoption of the final BIF, and completion of the FLUPs, DOF will offer the timber for sale by negotiating a contract with the purchaser. The contract will include stipulations to ensure compliance with the BIF, FLUP, and statutory requirements.

Step 6: Sale administration. DOF administers timber sales and conducts field inspections to ensure compliance with the final BIF, FLUP, timber sale contract, and any applicable laws, including the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95), and forest management statutes and regulations in AS 38.05 and 11 AAC 71.

V. PROJECT LOCATION, LAND STATUS, AND DESCRIPTION

A. Location

This PBIF covers approximately 29,440 acres (46 Sections) of State land within the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) and State lands classified Forestry under the Yukon-Tanana Area Plan (YTAP). The proposed sale units where the actual harvest would occur are located west of Fairbanks with the bulk of the units along two established logging roads (see Map): Group B is located on Nenana Ridge and is ~30 miles southwest of Fairbanks, south of the Parks Highway. Group A is located on the Standard Creek Road/Cache Creek Road networks and Group C is access from Murphy Dome Road).

B. Title status

Township, Range, Meridian	Acquisition Authority	Classification Order	Land Use Plan
T 1 N, R 4W, F	GS 27-Patented	NC-82-002 Forest	TVSF
T 1 S, R 5W, F	GS-37 – Patented	NC-82-065 Forest	TVSF
T 1 S, R 6W, F	GS-33 – Patented	NC-82-065 Forest	TVSF
T 3 S, R 7W, F	GS-33 – Patented	NC-82-065 Forest	TVSF
T4 S, R 7W, F	GS-33 – Patented	NC-82-065 Forest	TVSF
T 2 S, R 6W, F	GS-25 – Patented	NC-82-065 Forest	TVSF
T 3S, R 6W, F	GS-28, Selection	NC-10-005 DNR	YTAP
T3S, R7W, F	GS-23-Patented	NC-10-005 DNR	YTAP

C. Land use planning, classification, and management intent

The lands identified in this preliminary decision are managed under the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan in the following units. There are no specific restrictions stated in the TVSF Management Plan or TBAP that are applicable to this proposed project. The proposed harvest units are designed to be consistent with the intent of the two plans. All areas are open to subsurface use and mineral entry.

Township, Range, Meridian	Sale Unit Name	Area Plan Unit Identifier	Road Access Type
T1N, R4W F	Group A	TVSF 4C	All Season
T1S, R4W / R5W, F	Group A	TVSF 4C/4D	All Season
T 3S / 4S, R 7W, F	Group B	TVSF 5A	All Season
T3S, R6W, F	Group B	YTAP P-03	All Season
T3S, R7W, F	Group B	YTAP P-03	All Season
T 1 N, R 4W, F	Group C	TVSF 4C	All Season

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Plan supports forest development activities while minimizing land use conflicts.

The Interagency Fire Management Plan includes these lands in the “Full” protection category.

D. Current access and land use:

The areas where the 3 groups are located and receive traffic from a number of different users. They are all currently accessed via all season “mainline” roads and their off-shoots. Many of the trails are locally constructed routes that change over time.

The Division of Forestry manages almost all the land within the harvest areas with the exception of Township 5 South, Range 5 East where the Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) manages the land with guidance from the Yukon-Tanana Area Plan. There are no private or Non-state lands immediately adjacent to the proposed units. Access will use local roads, existing timber sale roads and new construction. DOF will then extend these as needed to reach the individual sale areas. Only the Murphy Dome Road is of special concern as it is a primary access point to the lower Chatanika River as well as several private parcels. This road has provided fishing/hunting, recreational, and wood cutting opportunities for the public for years on both State and Fairbanks North Star Borough lands. It is also used to provide four-wheeler and snow machine access to old fire line trails and historic routes. The proposed timber sale is not anticipated to

have any adverse impacts on private property or the important aquatic areas (Chatanika River, Minto Lakes).

Multiple trap lines and recreational trails are also within the general vicinity. Local residents and dog mushers from throughout the state use this area. Berry and mushroom picking, hiking, bike riding, predator calling, snow machining and mushing are also popular activities.

E. Background and description of proposal

1. Background: On May 25, 2023, the Fairbanks office received a letter from Aurora Energy Solutions, LLC requesting DOF consider offering a negotiated timber sale for value-added processing as set forth in Alaska Statute (AS) 38.05.123. DOF reviewed the request and determined that Aurora Energy Solutions, LLC, Jack Frost Logging, and Alaska Birch Works all met the requirements of AS 38.05.123. Offering them a long-term negotiated timber sale falls in line with the Division's goals of growing the local industry by ensuring their access to a stable raw material supply for the future to meet the growing demand. This guaranteed supply provides the certainty needed so they can continue to increase their production by reinvesting in their business and increasing the capacity of their facilities. DOF will provide a 10-year contract with 300-500 acres of spruce and birch available annually. The raw wood resource products would be in the form of logs to a minimum top of about 4-inches where they would be processed, split, and dried inside their kiln facility. DOF developed a response based on review of timber stand inventory, timber sale history and transportation data sources to determine viability of the sale duration and volume requested. Results of the assessment determined that stands of birch sawtimber and pole timber were available within 50 miles of Fairbanks and in most cases would include all-season access. Section (i) of AS 38.05.123 states that a negotiated sale does not affect other timber harvest programs.

DOF has designed this proposal to provide as much timber as possible from state land for in response to their request while protecting fish, wildlife, water resources, and avoiding impacts to local access, recreation uses and archaeological sites. Harvesting these stands would provide most of the volume requested but would not be sufficient to provide all the timber requested. The balance of the volume would need to be procured through DOF's regular timber sale auctions or from other timberland owners. In some of these stands smaller volumes of spruce or aspen logs may be made available for purchase at discretion of the Area Forester pending Aurora Energy Solution's, LLC written request.

2. Timber volume and sustained yield: Volume estimates are based on the 2013 Tanana Valley timber inventory and field measurements by DOF staff Foresters. The Fairbanks Area Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is calculated at approximately 4,600 acres of harvest annually. The sustained yield (SY) volume is calculated at over 9.250

million cubic feet. In this proposal harvests will occur over a 10-year period with an annual harvest of roughly around ~600,000 cubic feet. This action alone or in combination with the Fairbanks office's timber sales (proposed or sold) will not exceed the Fairbanks AAC or SY volume due to the proposed harvest size or anticipated sale schedule.

3. Harvest unit design: Within the overall acreage listed in this PBIF, the actual proposed harvest units will be closer to 4,000 acres. Units will be numbered and administered individually with a range of sizes from 7 acres and ~950 acres. Partial cuts, shelterwood, and clearcuts will be utilized to harvest the timber volumes. The specific silviculture prescription will be identified in the FLUPs. Sale unit boundaries will be located in proximity to the existing road system and along naturally occurring vegetative type changes within the area. The units will not be laid out in a block fashion. Islands of un-cut trees will be left in the units to maximize natural regeneration, and provide for wildlife habitat and visual screening. The sale areas were selected because they are birch dominated stands and represent the poletimber and sawtimber size classes, which will maximize the volume/acre. All harvests shall be managed on the landscape with the intent to minimize impacts to other land uses listed in the YTAP or TVSFMP. All harvests will be subject to Alaska FRPA and regulations.

- a. Reforestation and site preparation: The sale area will be reforested in compliance with the FRPA regulations (11 AAC 95.375-.390). On approved sites natural regeneration will be relied on to meet reforestation requirements due to expected initial re-growth of the area by hardwood species. Birch will likely begin to regenerate immediately following harvest. Spruce is expected to regenerate two to three years later in these cuts due to the dependence on seeding from adjacent and residual white spruce. Sale areas where the stand composition is a mixture of spruce and birch or there is anticipated to see heavy grass establishment, will be scarified to create a more receptive seed bed for natural regeneration. Scarification will be avoided on steep slope segments or when soils are excessively wet. Machinery will be operated along the contour of sloping ground.

Access design and construction: Access design, construction, and maintenance will comply with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.285-.355). Some all season primary and secondary road construction will be required, and one stream would be crossed by the access road.

Roads constructed as part of this sale are in upland areas and will be located where it is expected to have no impact to fish and water resources. Some segments of road will be constructed of material that will need to be hauled in. Some of the native materials on site will also need to be used. Standard methods typical for this kind of construction include an out-sloped design, ditching to

direct flow into culverts and possibly some drivable (log truck) rolling dips to control any silt runoff. Proposed forest access roads will be constructed/maintained to at-least a secondary standard. Winter roads are typically used in valley bottoms where associated permafrost and poorly drained soils occur. While not anticipated to be needed, winter roads would be constructed to leave the organic mat in place to avoid the melting of ground ice which can lead to ground settling and thermokarst.

Through careful planning, the area will be reduced that is covered by skid trails, roads and landings. Timber sale contracts will specify the location and type of erosion control required. Following the sale, all primary and secondary roads will be active and maintained. It is anticipated that these roads will be used for future timber sale access for the Fairbanks Area. If it is determined that a particular road segment will no longer be needed, it will be listed as inactive or closed as per FRPA regulations. Generally DOF applies for public easement right of ways for its long-term routes. These routes include many of the all season primary forest roads in the Fairbanks Management Area. DOF will apply for a public easement right of way for the segment of new road construction connecting Cache Creek Rd and Standard Creek Rd (via Standard East Rd).

Unit Groups	Access Location and Type	Stream Crossings
A	<p>*DOF anticipates Goldstream Ck Bridge will likely be CLOSED to vehicle traffic in the Spring of 2024 due to bank erosion and failing bridge supports. Approximately 2-3 miles of new primary access will need to be constructed connecting Cache Creek Rd to Standard East.</p> <p>Much of the Standard East Rd and Standard Creek Rd will need reconditioning including grading, reestablishing ditches, brushing ROW, and will include some bridge maintenance such as replacing the worn deck timbers on existing bridges .</p>	<p>Left Fork Ck, large diameter culverts to be installed at the upland crossing. The road will remain open.</p> <p>Kari Creek bridge, Spencer Creek bridge, Standard Creek bridge and Dunbar Creek bridge</p>
B	Primary access from the Parks Highway (at MP 328) will be Nenana Ridge Rd and Upper Grouse Rd. The Maisch Logging	Some reconstruction of the Upper Grouse Rd at the

	Rd will also be used to access the units to the south at MP 26 of the Parks Highway.	Dynamite Creek culvert may be required.
C	Murphy Dome Rd.	None

4. Appraisal method: DOF will appraise the timber value in compliance with 11 AAC 71.092 and under the provisions of AS 38.05.123. Per 11 AAC 71.092 when the commissioner considers entering into a timber sale contract under AS 38.05.123,
 1. the commissioner will establish a base price for timber stumpage that represents the cost to the Division of Forestry of administering the timber sale contract after purchase; the Division of Forestry may not sell the timber for less than its base price;
 2. the base price for timber determined under (1) of this subsection is subject to adjustment; the commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion, establish an initial stumpage rate; the rate is set by adding adjustments to the base price based upon factors that include, but are not limited to,
 - a. the projected or actual percentage of the volume of timber sold under the contract that is locally manufactured into high value-added wood products or other value-added wood products; and
 - b. the projected or actual costs to the purchaser of the timber of establishing or improving local manufacturing facilities for the wood products.

The DOF believes that it is in the State's best interest to establish a base price for this sale which will be the initial stumpage rate. This rate will be established at the beginning of the 10 year contract period and renegotiated a minimum of 3 times during the contract term. Based on transactional evidence and market demand, DOF will set the stumpage rate for the sale factoring in local demand for dry wood, the potential winter air quality benefit to the community, and economies of scale in its decision. It is anticipated that the method of payment will be based on lump sum payment units commensurate with logging production.

F. Resources and management

1. Timber.
 - a. Timber stand composition and structure: The forest stands being offered are birch dominated and typically found in interior Alaska consist of a mixture of mature white spruce (*Picea glauca*), black spruce (*Picea mariana*), birch (*Betula neoalaskana*) and aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). Balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) occurs in some of these stands as a minor species component. There are some

smaller stands of younger material interspersed in the sale area, but the harvest will target the specific size classes of pole and sawtimber.

- b. Stand silvics: Paper birch (*Betula*) occurs in pure stands but also within a mix of white spruce, black spruce and other hardwoods. Birch attains its best development on well-drained silt loam soils. The stands generally result from fires where adjacent unburnt birch trees spread considerable amounts of seed on the newly exposed sites. Birch can also regenerate vegetatively via stump sprouting for trees less than 60 years old. Upland stands typically grow on aspects other than due north or due south.
 - c. Topography and soils: The proposed sale will be designed and managed to prevent significant impairment of the land and water with respect to renewable resources (AS 41.17.060(c)(5)). All stand units are situated on upland sites with varying slope steepness and aspect. There are no floodplain stands designated in the proposed timber sale. Slope steepness ranges from 5-45%. There are few rock outcrops and soils are relatively deep providing for a low risk of erosion. Soils are generally productive and include the Fairbanks soil series classification. These soils are well drained silt loam, formed in silty loess and underlain by fractured schist. Permafrost is a common feature in the low areas of the tracts, but it is discontinuous. Road construction will be avoided in these areas. North-facing slopes, alluvial terraces, flat benches and depressions filled with organic matter may have ice near the soil surface. South-facing slopes generally lack permafrost.
2. Agriculture. Current agriculture activity in the area is mostly centered south and west of the Parks Highway along Little Goldstream Creek and the Tochaket Road. Activities in the sale unit are not expected to affect these agricultural uses.
 3. Wildlife habitat and harvest. Most common species of wildlife that are normally found in interior Alaska forests inhabit the area. During ground reconnaissance moose were sighted and sign were observed. There were no eagle nests seen. No critical wildlife habitat has been identified for this area (TVSF Management Plan), nor has any become apparent during ground reconnaissance. Proposed harvest treatments are projected to enhance habitat conditions for ruffed grouse, moose, voles, hares, and ultimately, lynx, marten and fox. By prescribing a variety of unit sizes, shapes and un-cut inclusions, managing for wildlife habitat diversity will be accomplished and will mimic the results of wildfire or other stand replacement phases such as insect outbreaks or wind events at the stand and landscape scales.

Hunting and trapping occur in the area. Active trap lines are located in the vicinity of the proposed harvest areas. Historically, there has been significant hunting activity in the area due to relatively high moose density and close proximity to Fairbanks.

Hunters utilize the existing logging road network and new access development will provide additional areas for hunters. Re-growth in previously logged areas provides prime wildlife habitat and hunters utilize the road system to scout and hunt in these areas.

4. Fish habitat, water resources, and water quality. The proposed sale will be designed and managed to protect fish habitat and water quality in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95) . Perennial and seasonal surface waters, ponds and marshes lie within the project area. DOF will consult with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) Division of Habitat to for any required Fish Habitat Permits.

The nearest significant water bodies are along access routes but do not lie within the proposed harvest units themselves. There are bridges on the existing all-season roads to cross these streams. If any stream crossings require Fish Habitat Permits from the ADF&G Division of Habitat, they will be pursued as needed and according to statutory requirements. There are no adverse affects anticipated upon the fish resources or on water quality from the proposed project at this time. Adherence to careful road construction and maintenance practices will be necessary to ensure that water quality for fish habitat is maintained.

There is no commercial fishing in the area. Sport fishing occurs on the Little Salcha and Salcha Rivers.

The proposed sale will be designed and managed to protect fish habitat and water quality in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95). Identify fish-bearing waters in the sale area, fishing activity, and likely effects of the timber sale on fish habitat.

5. Recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. General recreational use of the all season accessible areas is moderate to high. Much of the winter ground currently has limited access and recreation use is low. All season roads provide readily available access and are used for a variety of recreation activities. Tourism activity in the form of dog mushing is important in the Two Rivers area where a number of kennels are present along Chena Hot Springs Road. Dog mushing races also occur on trails in the area although the popular Yukon Quest race trail route is south of Chena Hot Springs Road and distant from the proposed sale. Two Rivers Road also provides four-wheeler and snow machine access to a fire line trail that leads to the popular Compeau Trail within the Chena River State Recreation Area.

Multiple trap lines and recreational trails are within the general vicinity. If any trails are encountered during road construction, contractors will maintain open trail crossings as well as post warning signs along the road.

The region's scenery includes lakes and streams that draw recreational users and views south to the Alaska Range. Typical interior Alaska views of forested vistas and mountainous horizons typify this area. Some visual impacts from the proposed harvests are anticipated to be within view of the general public. Sale area layouts will mimic the irregular borders associated with natural disturbances in areas where scenic values are of concern. The Parks Highway was designated an Alaska State Scenic Byway in 2008. The TVSF Management Plan provides guidance on timber sales in this area and specifies timber and road development be sited and designed to enhance views or minimize adverse impacts on scenic views from the Parks Highway.

6. Cultural resources. DOF works with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and avoid known cultural, historic or prehistoric sites in planning the proposed access routes and salvage areas. If additional archaeological sites are identified, proposed salvage areas and road locations will be appropriately adjusted to avoid conflicts. If any historic or archaeological sites are encountered during road construction or harvest activities, DOF will immediately inform SHPO and take action to protect the findings. DOF has consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on past timber sales in proximity to the proposed area.
7. Subsurface resources. None of the proposed sale areas themselves are within active mining claims.
8. Costs and Benefits. No significant negative economic effects are anticipated upon the timber markets, local or regional, because of this proposed action. DOF offers birch sales of varying volumes and acreage to commercial operators regularly at the Fairbanks office's annual timber sale auction. In recent years, Aurora Energy Solutions, LLC has bid and been awarded contracts at these auctions. They have also purchased and harvested several of the Division's Over-the-Counter (OTC) contracts, which had gone to auction in years prior and received no bids. Those contracts, like any contract on the OTC list, had been available to any commercial operator for purchase. The harvest volumes proposed in this PBIF were selected to ensure that, to meet their current and future demand of raw material (based on Aurora Energy Solution's projected growth in production), they would still need to purchase additional timber. While demand in the fuelwood market has fluctuated in the past, the industry demand has remained stable for white spruce sawtimber stands to produce sawn products and house logs. By providing a long-term, reliable supply of birch to Aurora Energy Solutions LLC the company will be able to continue to meet the local demand for dry firewood. This has the benefit of creating jobs drivers and workers in the processing/drying facility as well as in the forest. Additionally, the community benefits when residents choose to burn dried firewood over burning "wet" wood because it reduces local air pollution. A critical issue for the Fairbanks area where particulate emissions often exceed winter air quality standards.

The Division of Forestry has provided personal use firewood permits and commercial sales from this area to ensure an adequate supply of firewood for residents and sawtimber for commercial operators. This use is expected to continue during this proposed long-term sale. New road access construction and continued maintenance on existing roads during the 10 year term for the proposed sale will facilitate this process.

VI. PUBLIC REVIEW

The public and agencies are invited to comment on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding. To have comments on this PBIF considered, written comments must be received by the DOF Fairbanks Office **by** [REDACTED] in order to ensure consideration for review. Comments may be dropped off in person to the DNR Public Information Center or should be mailed to the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection at the same location, 3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, AK 99709, or by email to kevin.meany@alaska.gov. For more information you may contact:

Kevin D. Meany

Fairbanks-Delta Area Forester
Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
3700 Airport Way
Fairbanks, AK 99709
kevin.meany@alaska.gov
907-451-2602

To be eligible to appeal the final decision, a person must have provided written comment by **2/9/24**.

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

This PBIF is being publicly noticed in compliance with AS 38.05.945. Notice is posted on the Alaska Online Public Notice System, (<http://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>), posted to our public facing website (<http://forestry.alaska.gov/timber/fairbanks.htm#flup>), and also sent out using information from the physical and electronic mailer lists maintained at the local Area office.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION

After due consideration of all pertinent information and alternatives, the DNR has reached the following Preliminary Decision: To offer for sale approximately 4 acres of [general description of timber] to provide [list products/purposes; e.g., sawtimber/fuelwood/reduce fire

hazard/improve habitat] as proposed in Alternative [number of selected alternative] and described in this PBIF. The DOF finds that this preliminary decision satisfies the objectives 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(e) (Powers and Duties of the Director) & AS 38.05.110-120; 11 AAC 71 (Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations); and AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations).

To be eligible to participate in any appeal or request for reconsideration to the final finding, a person must be affected by the decision, and must have submitted comment to the preliminary finding and decision during the comment period.

If you have any questions, please contact [name, title, e-mail address, and phone number of contact person].

IX. SIGNATURE

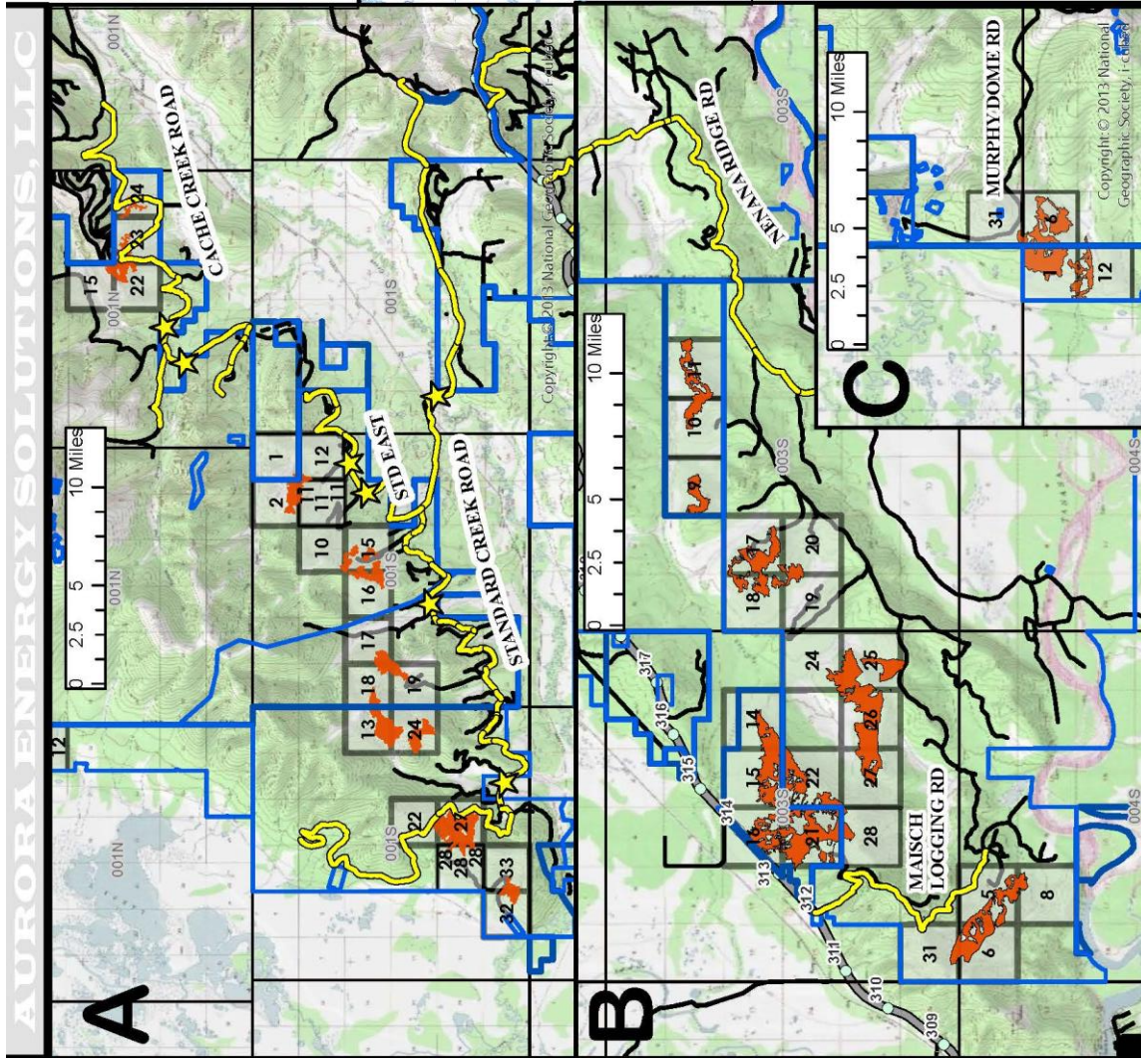
[Signer may be Regional Forester, State Forester, or Commissioner depending on the value, complexity, and Level of public controversy. Check with your Regional Forester for the appropriate signer.]

[Name]

Date

[Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection] [Alaska Department of Natural Resources]

X. TIMBER SALE MAPS

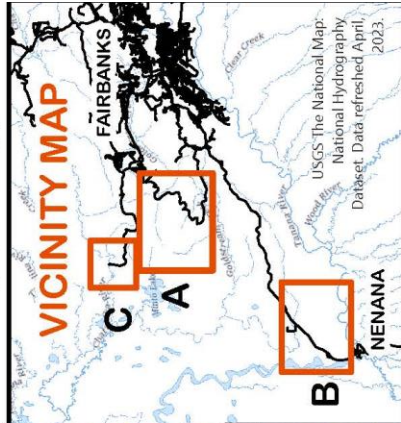


STATE OF ALASKA
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY
& FIRE PROTECTION

**NC-1971-F
ADL#422196**

GROUP A: ~1,429 ACRES
GROUP B: ~1,453 ACRES
GROUP C: ~638 ACRES

T1N, R4W SECTIONS 15, 22-24
T1S, R5W SECTIONS 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21
T1S, R6W SECTIONS 13, 22-24, 27, 28, 32, 33
T3S, R6W SECTIONS 9-11, 17-20
T3S, R7W SECTIONS 14-16, 21, 22, 24, 25-28, 31
T4S, R7W SECTIONS 5, 6, 8



Legend

- ★ DOF BRIDGE
- LOGGING ROAD
- ▭ PROPOSED UNITS
- ▭ NC-1971-F BIF Sections
- Milepost
- Parks Highway
- Forest Roads
- ▭ TVSF Lands
- ▭ State Lands Classified Forestry

