

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



FAIRBANKS AREA FORESTRY

**PRELIMINARY BEST INTEREST FINDING AND
DECISION FOR
BONANZA CREEK TIMBER PROJECT AREA
NC-1236-F, NC-1638-F, NC-1833-F, NC-2331-F, NC-2341-F,
NC-2342-F, NC-2344-F, NC-2582-F, NC-2583-F**

10/8/2026

Abbreviations

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
BIF	Best interest finding
DMLW	Division of Mining, Land and Water
DFFP	Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
FLUP	Forest Land Use Plan
FRPA	Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
FYSTS	Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales
MBF	Thousand board feet
OHA	Office of History and Archeology
ROW	Right-of-way
TVSF	Tanana Valley State Forest
TVSFMP	Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan 2025

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.....	4
C.	Land use planning, classification, and management intent.....	5
D.	Current access and land use:	5
E.	Background and description of proposal	5
F.	Resources and management.....	8
G.	Costs and benefits	12
VI.	PUBLIC REVIEW	13
VII.	PUBLIC NOTICE	13
VIII.	ALTERNATIVES AND DISCUSSION.....	14
IX.	RECOMMENDATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION	14
X.	SIGNATURE	15
XI.	ATTACHMENTS	16

I. PROPOSED ACTION

DFFP is proposing to offer for sale approximately 544 acres of spruce and birch sales from Tanana Valley State Forest lands within the Bonanza Creek Road area south of the Parks Highway and west of Fairbanks. DFFP intends to sell the timber as commercial offerings through the competitive bid (AS 38.05.120) program and/or small negotiated sale program (AS 38.05.115) over at least a 2-year period. For this project area, the PBIF and Draft FLUP are being issued for review at the same time. The land covered by this PBIF appeared in the 2024 and/or 2026 Fairbanks-Delta Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS).

The management objectives for the proposed timber sales are:

- Provide raw material for the forest industry to produce timber products that provide benefits to the state and local economy through employment opportunities.
- Harvest the commercial sawtimber and fuelwood before a significant decrease in vigor occurs and return the site to a young, productive mixed forest.
- Provide firewood for the residential heating needs of interior Alaska communities.
- Promote multiple use management that provides for the production, utilization, and replenishment of timber resources while perpetuating personal, commercial, and other beneficial non-timber uses of forest resources.

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 DFFP's Fairbanks-Delta Area Office filed as NC-1236-F, NC-1638-F, NC-1833-F, NC-2331-F, NC-2341-F, NC-2342-F, NC-2344-F, NC-2582-F, NC-2583-F.

IV. SCOPE OF DECISION

This preliminary best interest finding (PBIF) is the first part of step three of a six-step process to design, sell, and administer timber sales. 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 area in this PBIF is covered by the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan (TVSFMP) and Eastern Tanana Area Plan (ETAP). The finding also considers the Interagency Wildland Fire

Management Plan. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Wildfire Protection Plan covers this area. The proposed area is within the Fairbanks North Star Borough and this finding considers the Fairbanks North Star Borough Plan.

Step 2: Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (AS 38.05.113). The Fairbanks-Delta Area Office 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 are scoping documents that provide an opportunity for public, agency, and industry to identify potential issues and areas of interest for further consideration in the best interest finding and Forest Land Use Plan. A proposed timber sale must appear in at least one of the two Five-year Schedules preceding the sale.

Step 3: 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, DFFP reviews comments, makes changes as appropriate, and issues a final best interest finding (BIF). DFFP 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 4: Forest Land Use Plans (AS 38.05.112). Prior to authorizing harvest of timber on any area greater than 10 acres, the DFFP must adopt a site-specific Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the harvest area. DFFP will prepare FLUPs for the harvest areas within the overall project 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 DFFP, and will be subject to public and agency review.

Step 5: Timber sales and contracts. Following adoption of the final best interest finding, and completion of the FLUP(s), DFFP will offer the timber for sale by auctioning competitive sales and/or negotiating some sales with purchasers. The Division will sign a contract with the winning bidder for each sale. The contract will include stipulations to ensure compliance with the best interest finding, FLUP, and statutory requirements.

Step 6: Sale administration. DFFP administers timber sales and conducts field inspections to ensure compliance with the final best interest finding, FLUP, timber sale contract, and 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

The proposed project area is located approximately 21 miles southwest of Fairbanks along the Bonanza Creek Forest Road, which connects to the Parks Highway at mile 338.7. The project area is within TVSF Subunit 5A. Access passes through Subunit 5B, the UAF Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest.

The proposed sales are located within the Fairbanks Meridian at:

- **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce:** a 1-unit, 135-acre spruce sale located 3.4 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 2.3 miles on the Camp 78 Spur Road. The proposed sale is within Sections 20, 21, 28 & 29, Township 2 South, Range 4 West.
- **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce:** a 1-unit, 48-acre spruce sale located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. 1.1 miles of new spur road must be constructed to reach the sale boundary. The proposed sale is within Sections 6-7, Township 3 South, Range 4 West.
- **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1:** a 1-unit, 22-acre birch sale located 2.6 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 0.8 miles on a spur road. The proposed sale is within Sections 16 & 21, Township 2 South, Range 4 West,.
- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce:** a 1-unit, 45-acre spruce sale located 8.2 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road adjacent to the Tanana River. The proposed sale is within Sections 9 & 16, Township 3 South, Range 4 West.
- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed:** a 1-unit, 28-acre mixed wood sale located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 1.2 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. The proposed sale is within Section 32, Township 2 South, Range 4 West.
- **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed:** a 1-unit, 19-acre mixed wood sale located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 1.4 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. The proposed sale is within Sections 32-33, Township 2 South, Range 4 West,.
- **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce:** a 2-unit, 96-acre spruce sale located 3.4 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.9 miles on the Camp 78 Spur Road. The proposed sale is within Section 20, Township 2 South, Range 4 West.
- **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza:** a 1-unit, 109-acre birch sale located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. 0.6 miles of new spur road must be constructed to reach the sale boundary. The proposed sale is within Sections 6-7, Township 3 South, Range 4 West,.

- **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch:** a 2-unit, 42-acre birch sale located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. The proposed sale is within Sections 31-32, Township 2 South, Range 4 West, and Sections 5-6, Township 3 South, Range 4 West, F.M.

B. Title status

The proposed sale areas covered by this PBIF include land selected and patented by the State, and designated by the Legislature as part of the Tanana Valley State Forest. There are no known title restrictions on the area. These lands are subject to eventual conveyance to the University of Alaska as a land grant in 2055 (ADL 229382). Existing access roads to the proposed sales pass through the UAF Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest, designated as TVSF Subunit 5B. Subunit 5B is managed under a 55-year lease to the US Forest Service (ADL # 21408) which extends through 2074.

- **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce:** was selected by the State through GS542 and patented under 50-73-0010.
- **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce:** was selected by the State through MH33 and patented under 1220531.
- **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1:** was selected by the State through GS540 (F002S004W16) and GS540 (F002S004W21), and patented under 50-73-0010.
- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce:** was selected by the State through GS543 and patented under 50-73-0024 within F003S004W09, and was selected by the State through SCH174 and patented under 1227157 within F003S004W16.
- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed:** was selected by the State through GS542 and patented under 50-73-0010.
- **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed:** was selected by the State through GS542 and patented under 50-73-0010.
- **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce:** was selected by the State through GS542 and patented under 50-73-0010.
- **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza:** was selected by the State through MH33 and patented under 1220531.
- **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch:** was selected by the State through MH33 and patented under 1220531 within T2SR4W, and was selected by the State through GS542 and patented under 50-73-0010 within T3SR4W.

C. Land use planning, classification, and management intent

The proposed area is within the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) in Management Subunit 5A. Subunit 5A will be managed “for timber production, wildlife habitat, and recreation while minimizing impacts to scenic values along the Parks Highway and Tanana River where feasible and prudent.” There are no specific restrictions on timber sales within Subunit 5A directed by the TVSF Management Plan.

Access to the project area crosses Subunit 5B, the Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest. Subunit 5B will be managed to protect research activities and to maintain its value for experimental and observational research.

The sale areas are open with respect to mining.

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

This area falls under the Fairbanks-North Star Borough’s Regional Comprehensive Plan (2005), which supports forest development activities while aiming to minimize land use conflicts.

D. Current access and land use:

Access to the proposed project area is planned via an existing all-season road, the Bonanza Creek Forest Road, which has been used to access timber sales for over 60 years. The Bonanza Creek Forest Road system will be maintained according to the standards outlined in the 2016 DFFP Road Standards. New spur road construction is proposed in this project area to extend the Bonanza West Spur to **NC-1638-F**. Re-conditioning on existing inactive roads will facilitate access to **NC-2331-F** and **NC-2344-F**.

Current land uses include scientific research, hunting/trapping, recreational travel (e.g., biking, dog mushing), and OHV use. Nearby winter trails may be found on the Tanana River and to the east in the Rosie Creek drainage. No DNR-recognized RS-2477 trails pass through the project area.

E. Background and description of proposal

1. Background: According to the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan, Subunit 5A shall be managed “for timber production, wildlife habitat, and recreation while minimizing impacts to scenic values along the Parks Highway and Tanana River where feasible and prudent.” DFFP is offering these sales with the intent to maintain a productive working forest while continuing to provide for compatible public uses.
2. Timber volume and sustained yield: The proposed project area is estimated at 324 acres of spruce sawlog, 47 acres of mixed, and 173 acres of birch fuelwood, comprising roughly 3,585 MBF (8,745 CCF) of spruce sawlog and 3,397 cords (3,057

CCF) of mixed fuelwood. Final harvest unit boundaries and timber volume estimates will be determined upon completion of sale preparation activities. The Fairbanks Area Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is calculated at approximately 4,606 acres of harvest annually. The volumes proposed in these harvests alone, and in combination with timber volumes from other proposed timber sales, will be within the Annual Allowable Cut and comply with sustained yield requirements.

These sales shall be offered over at least 2 years or more, depending on demand. **NC-2344-F** and **NC-2583-F** would be offered in Year 1.

3. Harvest unit design: Proposed sales range in size from 19 to 135 acres, with an average of 60 acres. Larger sale units are planned within timber stands where a second entry would be uneconomic. The sale areas will be harvested by the clearcut silvicultural system. Patches of nonmerchantable advanced regeneration and significant snags important for wildlife habitat will be preserved as much as possible. Residual trees will be protected from damage during harvest operations although in spruce stands, over-mature birch may be used as bumper trees to protect patches of advanced spruce regeneration. Harvesting will be by the whole tree yarding system. Slash disposal at the landings will be by burning or by salvage for fuelwood use. Cutting units that are near the Tanana River and other FRPA waterbodies will be buffered by 100' at a minimum.
 - a. Reforestation and site preparation: The project area will be reforested in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.375-.390). Except where planting is indicated below, natural regeneration will be utilized initially for reforestation, and areas adjacent to the boundary with mature, robust spruce or birch trees will be retained to provide seed to these units. It is expected that the harvest methods (heavy partial cut and clearcut) will open sites and increase light and soil warmth. Reforestation will be assessed within five years post-harvest, and a regeneration survey will be conducted if regeneration appears marginal or patchy. If the survey indicates inadequately stocked areas, then scarification may be performed in non-stocked areas. The goal for regeneration is to achieve a minimum of 450 evenly distributed trees per acre at the end of the regeneration survey period (any commercial tree species).
 - **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce** (a 1-unit, 135-acre spruce sale) and **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce** (a 2-unit, 96-acre spruce sale) are expected to be reforested through a combination of planted white spruce seedlings and natural regeneration, particularly of hardwoods. The proposed harvest represents the final harvest entry into this area (previous harvests between 1973-1994).
 - **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce** (a 1-unit, 48-acre spruce sale) is expected to be reforested through a combination of planted white spruce seedlings and natural regeneration, particularly of hardwoods.
 - **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1** (a 1-unit, 22-acre birch sale) and **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch** (a 2-unit, 42-acre birch sale) are relatively narrow sales with the proposed harvest areas within the seed shadow of

adjacent mature mixed forest. Portions of the sale with slopes less than 20% may be mechanically scarified to prepare a suitable seedbed where ordinary harvest operations may not sufficiently prepare the ground.

- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce** (a 1-unit, 45-acre spruce sale) is relatively narrow and mostly within the seed shadow of retained spruce forest. Planting white spruce seedlings or retaining a wind-firm retention island of residual spruce seed source will be considered within the southern (wider) part of the proposed unit.
- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed** (a 1-unit, 28-acre mixed wood sale) and **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed** (a 1-unit, 19-acre mixed wood sale) are relatively narrow and are within the seed shadow of mature mixed forest.
- **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza** (a 1-unit, 109-acre birch sale) is designed to have wind-firm retention areas to ensure the harvested areas are within the seed shadow of mature birch trees. Portions of the sale with slopes less than 20% may be mechanically scarified to prepare a suitable seedbed where ordinary harvest operations may not sufficiently prepare the ground..

- b. Access design and construction: Access design, construction, and maintenance will comply with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.285-.355). The proposed project area is located approximately 21 miles southwest of Fairbanks along the Bonanza Creek Forest Road, which connects to the Parks Highway at mile 338.7. The project area is within TVSF Subunit 5A. Access utilizes existing roads through Subunit 5B, the UAF Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest. Scientific and research values within Subunit 5B as well as established installations within 5A will be protected from road development or harvest consistent with TVSFMP.

- **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce** is located 3.4 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 1.6 to 2.4 miles on the Camp 78 Spur Road. Multiple access spurs up to a quarter-mile in length will be needed north of Camp 78 Road to establish log landings within an efficient skidding distance.
- **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce** is located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. 1.1 miles of new spur road must be constructed to reach the sale boundary.
- **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1** is located 2.6 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 0.8 miles on an inactive spur road. The sale is on the downhill side of the road, and a 0.4 mile half-bench spur will be required to reach the lower areas of the sale. The sale boundary will be buffered at least 50 feet from the UAF Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest boundary.
- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce** is located 8.2 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road adjacent to the Tanana River. The final 0.4 miles of the road may require some reconditioning for all-season access

- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed** is located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 1.2 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road on the downhill side.
 - **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed** is located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 1.4 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road on the downhill side.
 - **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce:** a 2-unit, 96-acre spruce sale located 3.4 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.9 miles on the Camp 78 Spur Road. Spur roads will need to be constructed to reach the lower portion of both sale units.
 - **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza** is located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road. 0.6 miles of new spur road must be constructed to reach the sale boundary.
 - **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch** is located 4.5 miles down Bonanza Creek Forest Road, then west 3.0 miles on the Bonanza West Spur Road.
- c. Appraisal method: DFFP will appraise the timber value in compliance with 11 AAC 71.092. Results from past auctions will provide a basis for the appraisal. DFFP uses a transaction evidence appraisal system which will be used to determine base stumpage rates.

F. Resources and management

1. Timber.

a. Timber stand composition and structure:

- **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce:** a 1-unit, 135-acre spruce sale on an upland site from midslope to ridgeline. The sale area has an estimated white spruce sawlog component of 90 trees/ac and 100 ft²/ac of basal area. Stand age at breast height is 160 years.
- **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce:** a 1-unit, 48-acre spruce sale on an upland site from midslope to ridgeline. The sale area is primarily closed canopy mature spruce forest.
- **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1:** a 1-unit, 22-acre birch sale near the ridgetop on an upland site. The stand is a mature mixed wood forest dominated by birch with a small component of mature white spruce trees.
- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce:** a 1-unit, 45-acre spruce sale along the Tanana River floodplain with a minimum 100-ft riparian buffer. The sale area has an estimated white spruce sawlog component of 110 ft²/ac of basal area, and 30 ft²/ac of mixed fuelwood. Stand age at breast height is 150 years.
- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed:** a 1-unit, 28-acre mixed wood sale on the toe-slope of an upland site bounded by lower productivity valley bottom to the north. The stand is primarily white spruce sawtimber with a lesser component of merchantable mature birch.

- **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed:** a 1-unit, 19-acre mixed wood sale on the toe-slope of an upland site bounded by lower productivity valley bottom to the north. The stand is primarily white spruce sawtimber with a lesser component of merchantable mature birch.
 - **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce:** a 2-unit, 96-acre spruce sale on an upland site from midslope to ridgeline. The sale area has an estimated white spruce sawlog component of 110 ft²/ac of basal area. Stand age at breast height is 160 years. Unit 2 (west-most unit) has a more open canopy with slightly lower spruce and 35 ft²/ac of birch basal area.
 - **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza:** a 1-unit, 109-acre birch sale on an upland site from midslope to ridgeline. The sale area has an estimated birch fuelwood component of 170 trees/ac and 75 ft²/ac of basal area, with some incidental white spruce and aspen trees.
 - **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch:** a 2-unit, 42-acre birch sale on an upland midslope site. The sale area has an estimated birch fuelwood component of 204 trees/ac and 96 ft²/ac of basal area, with some incidental white spruce and aspen trees.
- b. Stand silvics: The common merchantable tree species in the Tanana Valley include white spruce, birch, aspen, and balsam poplar. Data and research on the regeneration and growth characteristics of these species are compiled in the Resource Analysis of the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) Management Plan. This analysis also reviews and lists the harvest and reforestation systems available in Interior Alaska. The outcomes of public and agency discussions on harvest and reforestation are included in the TVSF Management Plan. Silvicultural harvest systems that promote even-aged (natural) management are generally preferred. These systems mimic the ecological effects of wildfire and other disturbances, leading to the greatest increase in site productivity. Even-aged management is typically achieved through clear-cuts with reserves, patch cuts, and heavy partial cuts (such as seed tree or shelterwood systems), which open the site to maximum solar exposure. This approach results in the highest production of young hardwoods important for wildlife and spruce understory valuable for future timber. These techniques create young, vigorously growing stands next to older, undisturbed stands, optimizing natural seeding and enhancing the edge effect.
- c. Topography and Soils: The proposed project area 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)).
- **NC-1236-F / Camp 78 Spruce:** is located on an upland site between 675-1,025' elevation with a south aspect. Slopes are 10-25%, with the steepest areas just below the ridgetop. The sale area covers two distinct drainage basins, each dissected by hogback and swale topography on the upper slopes. The sale area is underlain by the Gilmore silt-loam soil type nearest the ridgetop, and the Fairbanks silt-loam on the lower elevations. These soil types are rated as well-drained, with weathered bedrock underlying the ridgetop

areas, and deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess on the lower elevation areas.

- **NC-1638-F / Bonanza Creek South Spruce:** is located on an upland midslope site between 625-775' elevation with a west aspect. Slopes are 5-15%. The sale area is underlain by the Fairbanks-Steese complex soil type. This soil type is rated as well-drained with deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess.
- **NC-1833-F / Bonanza Birch #1:** is located on an upland ridgetop site between 1,075-1,175' elevation with an east aspect. Slopes are 10-30%, steepest at the lowest elevation parts of the sale. The sale area is underlain by the Gilmore silt-loam soil type nearest the ridgetop, and the Steese silt-loam on the steeper/lower elevations. These soil types are rated as well-drained, with weathered bedrock approximately 3 feet down.
- **NC-2331-F / Mantis Spruce:** is located along the Tanana River floodplain with a minimum 100-ft riparian buffer between the sale and the riverbank. The sale area is at 400 feet of elevation, and is mostly flat with inactive re-forested slough channels throughout. The sale is underlain by the Eielson-Piledrive complex soil type. This soil type is a sandy loam, moderately well-drained, and prone to flooding and continued alluvial deposition.
- **NC-2341-F / Chili Bean Mixed:** is located on the toe-slope of an upland site bounded by lower productivity valley bottom to the north. The proposed sale is between 650-725' elevation with a west aspect. Slopes are 5-8%. The sale area is underlain by the Fairbanks silt loam soil type. This soil type is rated as well-drained with deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess.
- **NC-2342-F / Green Bean Mixed:** is located on the toe-slope of an upland site bounded by lower productivity valley bottom to the north. The proposed sale is between 650-725' elevation with a west aspect. Slopes are 5-8%. The sale area is underlain by the Fairbanks silt loam soil type. This soil type is rated as well-drained with deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess.
- **NC-2344-F / Soy Bean Spruce:** is located on an upland site extending from ridgetop to the toe slope between 625-875' elevation. Unit 1 (east) has with a south aspect and extends around a single drainage basin with 10-15% slope. Unit 2 (west) has with a west-northwest aspect with 10-20% slope. Both units are defined by hogback and swale topography, especially on the upper slopes. Both units are underlain by the Gilmore silt-loam soil type nearest the ridgetop, and the Minto silt-loam (Unit 2) or Fairbanks silt-loam (Unit 1) on the lower elevations. These soil types are rated as well-drained, with weathered bedrock underlying the ridgetop areas, and deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess on the lower elevation areas.
- **NC-2582-F / Birchnanza:** is located on an upland midslope site between 600-825' elevation with a northwest aspect. Slopes are 5-20%, with some incipient hogback and swale topography along the steeper upper elevations. The sale area is underlain by the Fairbanks silt-loam and Fairbanks Steese complex soil types. These soil types are rated as well-drained, with deep (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess.

- **NC-2583-F / Butterfly Birch:** is located on an upland midslope site between 650-850' elevation with a west to northwest aspect. Slopes are 10-25%, with hogback and swale topography along the upper elevation areas. The sale area is underlain by the Fairbanks silt-loam soil type, with part of the southern unit including some soils from the Fairbanks-Steese complex. These soil types are rated as well-drained, and are underlain by weathered bedrock in the steeper areas, with deeper (> 80 inches) layers of windblown loess on the flatter areas.
2. Agriculture. No known or anticipated future agricultural activity is expected in the proposed area.
 3. Wildlife habitat and harvest. Wildlife typical of the Interior are found here, with signs of moose and grouse observed during field reconnaissance. Large portions of the proposed area offer excellent habitat for moose, black bear, and furbearing animals. There are no known raptor nests within the proposed area. If an eagle nest tree is discovered in the sale area, it will be marked on the ground and a 330-foot no-harvest radius will be established to protect the area.

The proposed treatments for these stands are expected to enhance habitat conditions for ruffed grouse, moose, voles, hares, and, ultimately, lynx, marten, and fox. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation (ADFG), have historically recommended managing for as much diversity as possible when prescribing harvest unit size, shape, and position to mimic the results of wildfire or other stand replacement phases such as insect outbreaks or flood events. To achieve these objectives, snags will be retained to provide late-successional wildlife habitat for hole-nesting birds, woodpeckers, small mammals, and other species requiring perching habitat. The units will be laid out with uneven edges along and between timber types where possible, creating a varied edge effect beneficial to many wildlife species.

4. Fish Habitat, water resources, and water quality. The proposed project area 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). Tanana River is classified as Type III-B stream (glacial with resident fish) under the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA). FRPA allows for sustainable timber harvesting while ensuring the protection of its high-value resident fish habitats. The Tanana River system provides critical spawning and rearing habitat for salmon and is recognized by ADF&G as an anadromous stream for salmon habitat (AWC Code: 334-40-11000-2490).

NC-2331-F is the only proposed sale near to the Tanana River in this BIF. **NC-2331-F** is adjacent to the Tanana River and will be buffered at least 100' off the riverbank's edge. All other sales are at least 0.5-4.5 miles from the Tanana, though they are within 0.4-1.0 miles of perennial tributaries of Bonanza Creek.

Two ponds each less than one acre in area are located downslope approximately 200 feet from the edge of **NC-2344-F** Unit 2.

5. Recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. The proposed project area lies between the Parks Highway and the Tanana River, an area that sees extensive use by a myriad of user groups in all seasons of the year. The Tanana River is important for recreational boating, camping, snowmachining, and access to surrounding areas for hunting and fishing. The clearwater tributaries of the Tanana are also important for fishing and hunting. In the winter, the Tanana River corridor is used for winter recreation. The many logging roads in this unit provide access for recreational activities. Grouse and moose hunters use the area in the fall. Views of the Alaska Range and Tanana River are especially good from the Parks Highway in this unit. Tourism operators are known to utilize portions of the trail system as well, for example for dog mushing or snowshoeing. Operators take people out on the Tanana River and its tributaries for fishing, hunting for bear, moose, and birds, and camping, fishing, and wildlife viewing. Forest roads in this area are heavily used by non-timber forest product harvesters (e.g., for morels) and for other recreational and personal uses.

NC-2344-F Unit 2, and portions of **NC-1638-F** and **NC-2582-F** will be visible from the Parks Highway. Irregular stand edges and retention of mature forest between the harvest boundaries and the Highway will reduce the visual effect. **NC-2331-F** may be discernible from the Tanana River, though the retention of a riparian buffer will obscure the harvest's scenic impact.

6. Cultural Resources. DFFP 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 harvest areas. If additional archaeological sites are identified, proposed harvest 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, DFFP will immediately inform SHPO and take action to protect the findings.
7. Subsurface Resources. All of TVSF Unit 5A is open to mineral entry and is available for leasing. The highly mineralized Cleary Sequence underlies most of the subunit. Existing quarries and bedrock outcrops provide sources of material near the Parks Highway. No active mining claims are established within the project area. No deleterious effects on subsurface activities are anticipated.

G. Costs and benefits

Local commercial logging operators and their customers will benefit from the inflow of raw timber into the market. In addition to generating royalties to the State's general fund, the proposed sales will create economic benefits for the communities of Fairbanks and Nenana and other locations in Alaska. The local business community will receive direct economic benefit from providing support services for the operators through sales of fuel, food, housing,

medical and miscellaneous supplies. Local residents may receive an indirect benefit through any local taxes paid by the operator and employees during the timber harvest operations.

These sales are expected to benefit the local economy by providing jobs. It will have a positive impact on local employment by generating numerous man-hours of work associated with the harvest and transportation of wood products from this sale. Additionally, the public may benefit from additional fuelwood availability, as home heating costs remain high in Interior Alaska.

Minimal negative effects are expected on fish and wildlife habitat or water quality. These sales are all buffered at least 100 feet from any perennial water source. Retention of adjacent areas of mature timber, as well as the creation of landscape heterogeneity through harvest, is expected to minimize any impacts to wildlife habitat.

VI. PUBLIC REVIEW

The public and agencies are invited to comment on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding. Objections or comments pertaining to the proposed action must be received in writing by the DFFP Fairbanks-Delta Area Office by **4:30pm AKST Friday, November 6th, 2026** in order to ensure consideration for review. Comments should be mailed to the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, 3700 Airport Way Fairbanks AK 99709 or by email to andrew.allaby@alaska.gov. For more information you may contact Andrew Allaby, Fairbanks-Delta Area Resource Forester, andrew.allaby@alaska.gov, (907) 451-2603. To be eligible to appeal the final decision, a person must have provided written comment by **4:30pm AKST Friday, November 6th, 2026**

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

This PBIF was publicly noticed in compliance with AS 38.05.945. Notice will be posted on the Alaska Online Public Notice System, and both physical and electronic notices were mailed to previous timber sale bidders as well as any property owners or business interests known to the Division in the proposed sale area. Notice will also be posted on the Division of Forestry public webpage.

VIII. ALTERNATIVES AND DISCUSSION

There are 4 possible alternatives to consider for this project area. A discussion of each of the alternatives follows. All alternatives are consistent with the area plan and applicable statutes and regulations.

1. To continue the sales as proposed.

This alternative meets the objectives of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales and DNR's constitutional mandate, and is consistent with the land classification. 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 logging and trucking. This alternative also complies with the management objectives of the TVSF Management Plan for Subunit 5A.

2. To modify the sales by making them smaller or larger.

The proposed sale units are logical settings for typical commercial logging equipment in Interior Alaska. The sizes of these sales are designed to be large enough to be economically viable considering access development and mobilization costs and distance to processing facilities. Sales within this size range are appropriately balanced to maintain other resource values as well as provide economic benefits to the Tanana Valley.

3. Defer the sales of 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.

4. 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 and senescence of mature trees results in the loss of economic value.

IX. 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 544 acres of spruce, mixed and birch sales from Tanana Valley State Forest lands along the Bonanza Creek Forest Road as proposed in Alternative 1 and described in this PBIF. DFFP 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 a comment on the preliminary finding and decision during the comment period.

If you have any questions, please contact Fairbanks-Delta Area Resource Forester, Andrew Allaby, andrew.allaby@alaska.gov, 907-451-2603.

X. SIGNATURE

Kevin Breitenbach
Fairbanks-Delta Area Forester
Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

Date

XI. ATTACHMENTS

Maps of the proposed project area follow.

















