visual quality, cultural resources, TES species, and wild and scenic river study corridors, and would comply with the Bull Trout Conservation Agreement and the PACFISH guidelines for water quality, and fisheries.

This project would be accomplished through a salvage sale of burned timber on about 8,800 acres, using helicopter logging, skyline logging, and tractor logging; approximately 3.5 miles of road construction in the upper Elkhorn Creek area (followed by road closure); planting of conifer seedlings; and reconstruction or repair of roads to improve vehicle passage and improve watershed conditions. The salvage sale proceeds would help finance the other activities.

The project lies 20 to 35 miles north of McCall, in the Elkhorn, French, Fall, and Carey Creek drainages, tributary to the main Salmon River. It lies partly within the French Creek/Patrick Butte Roadless Area.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kimberly Brandel, New Meadows District Ranger (208 634–0300); or Tracy Beck, Interdisciplinary Team Leader (208 634–0780).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: From July to October 1994, wildfires covered a total of about 290,000 acres of Payette National Forest. The Corral Fire was ignited in early August by lightning strikes northwest of the city of McCall, and eventually covered about 116,000 acres until stopped by winter weather in mid-October. Within this perimeter, it burned in a mosaic pattern of fire intensities including some unburned areas.

In October, Payette National Forest convened three interdisciplinary groups of Forest resource specialists to assess the landscapes affected by the fires: one each of the Blackwell landscape, the Corral landscape, and the Chicken landscape. Each landscape was composed of two or more watersheds. The Corral landscape encompassed over 203,000 acres in French Creek and Lake Creek watersheds and portions of California Creek and Lower Main Salmon watersheds. The Forest also convened a team to assess the broadscale area, which encompasses the three landscapes plus the Thunderbolt landscape to the south.

In January 1995, each landscape team produced a landscape assessment encompassing their analysis area. The teams used a ecosystem-based approach to assess the fires' effects and to propose target landscape conditions, based on the Forest Plan and the historic range of variation. Each team identified management opportunities that could be implemented this year and in the future

to move their postfire landscape toward the target landscape design. The Forest leadership team selected a package of proposed actions for each landscape to bring forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis process.

The Proposed Action for the main Salmon River described herein is one product of the Corral landscape assessment: it proposes the high-priority short term projects related to timber salvage and other postfire resource opportunities consistent with the target landscape design for the Corral landscape.

Burn intensities, as defined by degree of tree mortality, in the Corral landscape varied from intensely burned to unburned. Within the Corral landscape, which includes a portion of the Corral fire, approximately 22,500 acres burned at high intensity (tree mortality greater than 90%), 19,600 acres at moderate intensity (tree mortality greater than 30% and less than 90%), and 25,300 acres at low intensity (tree mortality less than 30%). The remainder of the landscape did not burn.

An estimated 90,220 acres of the French Creek/Patrick Butte Roadless Area lie within the Corral landscape.

Simultaneous with this Notice of Intent, Payette National Forest is also publishing two Notices of Intent for other postfire proposals. The "Fall Creek Postfire Project" EIS will cover part of the Blackwell landscape, and the "Lower South Fork Salmon River Postfire Project" EIS will cover the Chicken landscape. The Forest Service will analyze the two projects concurrently with this "Main Salmon River Postfire Project" proposal.

Purpose and Need

The need is to move toward the desired future conditions, goals and objectives as described in the Payette Forest Plan and the target landscape design in the Corral Landscape Assessment. The Corral Landscape Assessment was tiered to the Forest Plan and identifies a strategy to implement the plan in an ecosystem management context. The proposed action is derived from management opportunities in the landscape assessment. The purpose of each element of the proposed action is:

Salvage: To recover economic value of burned timber for counties and timber-related industries and provide wood fiber for society. Past experience with wildfire timber recovery in south-central Idaho indicates that prompt harvest is needed to recover the economic value of fire-killed trees. The trees in this project area, mostly

Douglas-fir, spruce/fir, and lodgepole pine, are expected to lose 30–60 percent of their economic value by the end of 1996. Part of the salvage sale proceeds will finance the regeneration, watershed improvement, and recreation elements of the project.

Regeneration: To promptly return to production those lands within the suited base that contribute to the allowable sale quantity.

Watershed projects: To improve watershed conditions to meet beneficial uses (fish habitat and domestic water supply).

Recreation: To improve recreation user access and reduce safety hazards caused by the fire.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action has the following components:

1. Salvage harvest fire killed and imminently dead trees on approximately 8,800 acres using helicopter, skyline, and tractor. Construct helicopter landings along roads. Specifically, in Elkhorn Creek drainage, harvest within 3,540 acres, construct approximately 3.5 miles of road (close the new road to the public during and after salvage sale activities), and improve 12 miles of road. In French Creek drainage, harvest within 3,510 acres and improve 7.5 miles of road. In Fall and Carey Creek drainages, harvest within 1,750 acres and improve 25 miles of road. In the Lake Creek drainage, the Proposed Action includes road improvements and other resource improvement projects, but no salvage timber harvest. All road improvement work is detailed in item 3. of the proposed action. The proposal would not salvage harvest within the French Creek wild and scenic study corridor. It would not salvage harvest within **PACFISH Riparian Habitat Conservation** Areas, which include riparian corridors along perennial and intermittent streams, wetlands, landslides, and landslide prone areas, where ripariandependent resources receive primary emphasis. Harvesting would comply with the Draft Bull Trout Conservation Agreement. Site-specific integrated prescriptions to provide for snag/down woody debris retention, visual quality, cultural resource protection, and TES plant and animals would be developed consistent with the Forest Plan. landscape assessment and current policy/research.

2. Regenerate productive forest suited acres within the project area by planting conifer seedlings or ensuring natural regeneration.

3. Reconstruct or repair roads to facilitate log haul, improve vehicle