

# Rim Fire Recovery (43033) Scoping Package

Stanislaus National Forest  
Groveland and Mi-Wok Ranger Districts  
Mariposa and Tuolumne Counties, California

The Forest Service is seeking initial scoping comments on the proposed Rim Fire Recovery (Rim Recovery) project. The Rim Recovery project is located within and adjacent to the Rim Fire perimeter in the Stanislaus National Forest on portions of the Mi-Wok and Groveland Ranger Districts (Figure 1). Elevations within the project area range from 3,000 feet to 7,000 feet.

This scoping package provides information related to the proposed action, the scoping process and how to submit comments. Other project information and detailed project maps (Figure 2) are available online at: [http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=43033](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=43033).

## Background

The Rim Fire started on August 17, 2013 in a remote area of the Stanislaus National Forest near the confluence of the Clavey and Tuolumne Rivers about 20 miles east of Sonora, California. Over the next several weeks it burned 257,314 acres, including 154,430 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands, becoming the third largest wildfire in California history.

On August 22, 2013 after determining that conditions within the burn area were unsafe for public travel, Forest Supervisor Susan Skalski issued a temporary Forest Order (STF 2013-08) that prohibited public use within the burn area. The Forest Supervisor issued several updates changing the closure area to meet the current situation on the ground (2013-09 on 8/23/2013; 2013-10 on 8/31/2013; 2013-11 on 9/12/2013; 2013-14 on 9/27/2013). On November 18, 2013 the Forest Supervisor issued the current temporary Forest Order (STF 2013-15) that prohibits public use within the burn area until November 18, 2014.



*View of the Rim Fire looking east up Reed Creek from the Cottonwood road just east of the Clavey River. Shows mosaic of high, moderate and low burn.*

## Purpose and Need

An event as large as the Rim Fire provides an opportunity to look at restoration at a landscape scale, considering the many features and structures that are desirable and sustainable for future forested conditions. The Forest Plan long-term management goals (USDA 2010, p. 5-15)<sup>1</sup> include goals to create a fire resilient forest where fire is an integral part of the system, not a landscape altering force. To sustain forests into the future, natural and prescribed fire will be an important tool to protect this area from another stand replacing event. To that end, Stanislaus National Forest Fire and Fuels managers together with Researchers from the Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) compiled a strategy for the Rim Fire area outlining conditions along with features on the landscape that could help reduce the size and severity of future fires. The goal is not to prevent fires within the forest, but to modify fire behavior to

<sup>1</sup> USDA 2010. Forest Plan Direction. Forest Service, Stanislaus National Forest, Sonora, CA. April 2010

lower severity, and to bring these areas back to a more historic heterogeneous structure where fire complements and sustains the system instead of destroying it. The proposed structures include shaded fuel breaks along roads, large blocks of forest with lower densities adjacent to critical areas (i.e. private property and old forest emphasis areas), heterogeneous forest structure throughout the area (planting in clumps and variable spacing of trees), limited plantations on southern and southwestern slopes where natural fire return intervals are high and the tree growing ability is low, and prescribed and natural fire within these stands every 5 to 20 years. These features located across the landscape provide safe locations for firefighters to work from during wildfires and to utilize during prescribed burning activities. The fire and fuels strategy fits well with the overarching objective of sustainable old forests for wildlife and timber production. Several critical wildlife species lost habitat within the Rim Fire; and providing opportunities to return forests to this area is critical for sustainable populations and connectivity of habitat for wildlife movement and expansion.

Salvage logging is the first step in the process of long-term forest recovery. In order to provide critical structures within the new forests over time, snags and down logs will be left, but excess trees will be removed. Snags will provide short term benefits for many species of wildlife, and long-term down woody structure. Most of the stands that burned were over stocked due to decades of fire exclusion and now have far more dead trees within them than would have occurred naturally. In addition, the vast area of high severity burn is far larger than historic gap sizes would have been in the Sierra Nevada, setting up another severe fire scenario if not treated. If the dead material were left and burned again, severe soil damage (hydrophobic soils) could result and be far more damaging than the Rim Fire.



*Charred logs within the interior of the Rim Fire on the Stanislaus National Forest.*

The Forest Service completed the Stanislaus National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) on October 28, 1991. The Stanislaus National Forest “Forest Plan Direction” (USDA 2010) presents the current Forest Plan management direction, based on the original Forest Plan, as amended. The Forest Plan includes Goals, Strategies and Objectives for this project (p. 5-7 and 11-15). The overall purposes of this project are to:

- Capture the economic value of hazard trees and dead trees which pays for their removal from the forest and potentially for other future restoration treatments.
- Provide for greater worker and public safety.
- Reduce fuels for future forest resiliency.
- Improve road infrastructure to ensure proper hydrologic function.

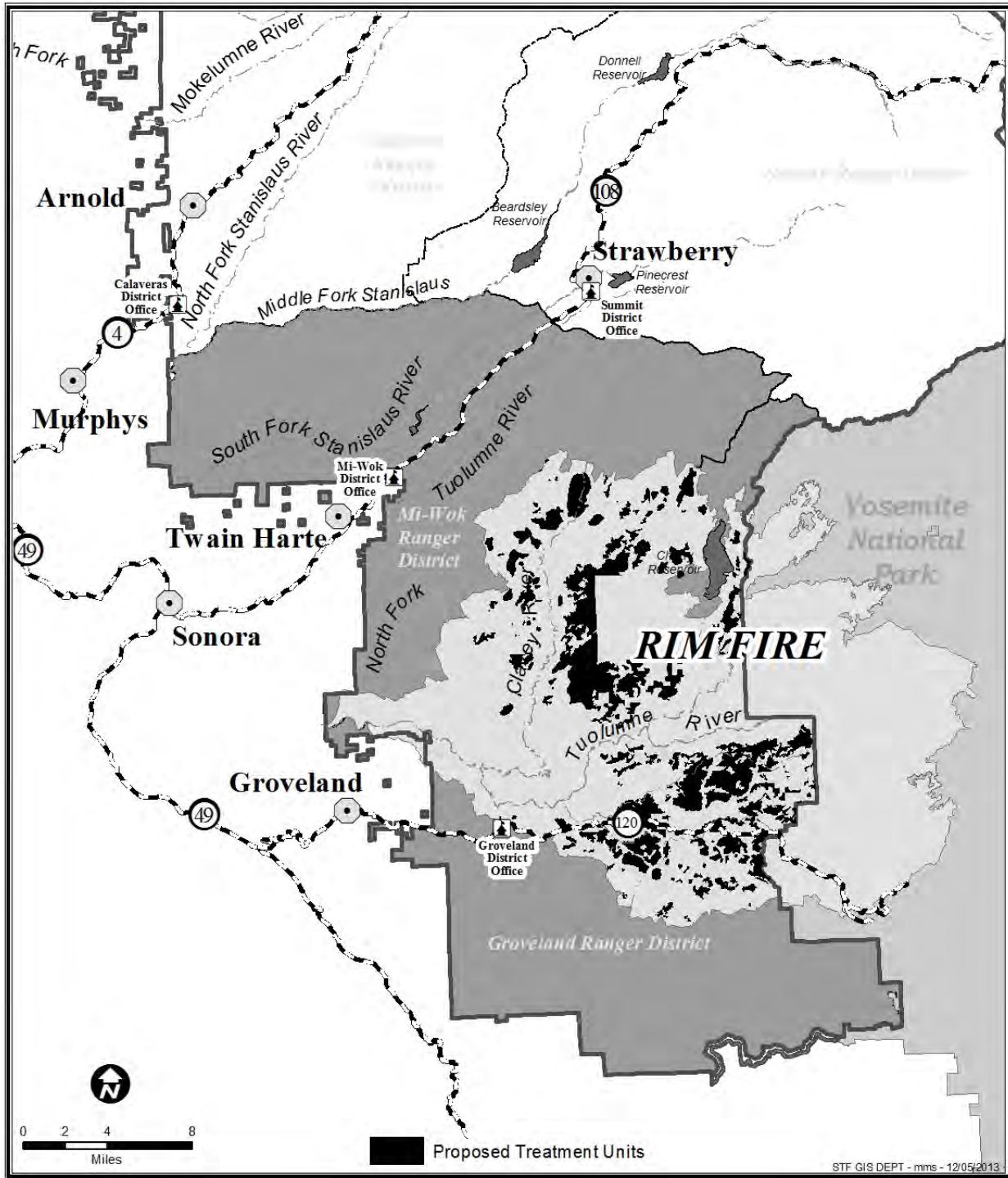


Figure 1 Rim Fire Recovery: Vicinity Map

Based on those purposes, the ID Team identified the following needs:

- Reduce the existing fuel load from standing dead trees. Key areas identified may be less economical, but critical for creating greater fire resiliency of future forests.
- Remove excess fuels because tree mortality exceeds the needs for snag and log recruitment on these lands. The excess trees would result in high fuel loading that would increase the potential of destroying the recovering forest before it could mature.
- Protect soils from future fires which would be of very high intensity if the dead material is not removed.
- Retain burned forest across the landscape to provide sufficient habitat for wildlife species dependent on post-fire environments.
- Retain snags and downed logs within treatment units to provide habitat structure for wildlife in old forest emphasis areas.
- Identify a forest carnivore connectivity corridor linking habitat areas across the landscape.
- Identify areas within critical winter deer range for salvage and non-merchantable material removal to achieve desired forage/cover ratios.
- Emphasis within Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs) and the Clavey River Critical Aquatic Refuge (CAR) is to enhance native vegetation cover, stabilize channels by non-structural means, and minimize adverse effects from existing roads and exposed bare soil.

### **Proposed Action**

The Forest Service proposed action, within the Rim Fire perimeter in the Stanislaus National Forest, includes: salvage of dead trees; removal of hazard trees and dead trees along roads open to the public; fuel reduction for future forest resiliency to fire; and, road improvements for proper hydrologic function. Implementation is expected to begin summer 2014 and continue for up to 5 years. Roadside hazard trees will be designated for removal using the Hazard Tree Guidelines for Forest Service Facilities and Roads in the Pacific Southwest Region, April 2012 (Report RO-12-01). Dead trees will be designated for removal based on “no green needles visible from the ground”.

Proposed treatments in the project area include:

- Salvage of dead trees and fuel reduction (29,648 acres) including ground based mechanized equipment such as harvesters and rubber tired skidders (25,174 acres) and aerial based helicopter (3,147 acres) or cable systems (1,327 acres) as listed in Table 3.
- Removal of hazard trees, salvage of dead trees and fuel reduction along existing Level 2 roads (369 miles).
- Road reconstruction (327 miles) and road maintenance (164 miles) for proper hydrologic function and stream protection.
- New road construction (6 miles) to allow for salvage removal and long-term access for future activities.
- Temporary road construction (22 miles). Temporary roads will be decommissioned following completion of project activities.
- Rock quarry sites (75 sites) identified to accommodate road needs.
- Water sources (95 locations) identified for new road construction, reconstruction and maintenance as well as long-term resource needs.
- Site Specific Forest Plan Amendments may be included.

No treatments are proposed within Wilderness, Inventoried Roadless Areas, or the wild classification segments of the Wild and Scenic Rivers. Project design will incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) according to regional and national guidance.

Merchantable trees [likely those dead trees greater than 16 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) by the time of harvest] would be removed as sawlogs and non-merchantable trees of smaller diameters may be masticated (shredded), felled and lopped, machine piled and burned, or removed as biomass. Harvest would occur in a timely manner to minimize loss of value; dead trees lose their value within 2 years, even less time for smaller diameter material. It is anticipated salvage harvest operations would begin as soon as August 2014 and continue for up to 5 years.



*A small creek running through a high severity burned area of the Rim Fire.*

The proposed action includes the following requirements which support the long-term objectives within the Rim Fire landscape:

1. Whole tree yard merchantable trees within salvage units where fuel levels exceed desired amounts. If breakage from trees occurs during logging operations and debris amount exceeds 10 tons/acre, piling and burning and/or jackpot burning may be utilized.
2. Where existing fuel loads are less than or equal to 5 tons/acre, some trees may be felled and left in place or masticated into pieces less than 2 feet in size to reduce potential soil erosion and maintain soil productivity. Total fuel loading for these units should not exceed 10 tons/acre with a fuel bed depth of less than or equal to 0.5 feet. Woody debris less than or equal to 8 inches in diameter will not exceed 3 tons/acre.
3. When dead and down woody fuels (3 inches and above) within salvage units exceed 10 tons/acre, piling and burning, and/or jackpot burning may be used to reduce fuel loading.
4. Consider habitat needs for sensitive aquatic species and meet habitat needs for Federally listed Threatened and Endangered aquatic species:
  - a. Prohibit mechanical operations within 1 mile of areas identified as suitable California red-legged frog breeding habitat during the wet season (the first rainfall event depositing more than 0.25 inches of rain on or after October 15 until April 15).
  - b. Maintain a 30 foot no cut and no equipment buffer adjacent to identified suitable California red-legged frog aquatic habitat (breeding and non-breeding).
  - c. Do not locate burn piles within 100 feet of California red legged frog breeding habitat or within 50 feet of non-breeding aquatic habitat.
  - d. Ignite all hand piles within 1 mile of suitable California red legged frog breeding habitat on only one side, not to exceed half the circumference of the pile, on the side furthest from the nearest aquatic feature.
  - e. Roads and landings, if constructed, must be located at least 300 feet from suitable California red legged frog breeding and non-breeding aquatic habitat, and construction within 1 mile of suitable habitat must occur in the dry season (April 15 through October 15).
  - f. To promote the storage of sediment and habitat formation in streams, retain existing downed large woody debris greater than or equal to 24 inches in diameter at the small end that is either crossing a perennial channel or within 30 feet of the stream edge. Tops may be removed if fuel issues are a concern; however, 50 percent of the tree bole should remain in the RCA.
  - g. To provide key pieces of wood to the channel, retain a minimum of 20 pieces of large woody debris (trees of the largest diameter) per mile of perennial and intermittent channels in salvage units. These trees should be felled into the stream in an upstream direction (greater than 45

degrees from perpendicular) to the maximum extent possible in order to actively recruit large wood to the channel. If these trees pose an unacceptable fuels risk, retain the largest portion of the bole equivalent to three times the bankfull width of the stream.

- h. Adjacent to Abernathy Meadow (Unit U01), retain 12 trees per acre around the perimeter of the meadow, extending 300 feet from the edge of the meadow to replace important elements for western pond turtle habitat. These trees shall be felled and left on the ground and be representative of the largest 50 percent of the trees in the retention zone.
- i. Prohibit equipment operation from March 1 through June 1 within 300 feet of “Big Kibbie Pond” in Unit O02 and Abernathy Meadow in Unit U01, and during periods when Abernathy Meadow has standing water.
- j. Do not allow new road construction, including temporary roads, within 0.25 miles of Abernathy Meadow in Unit U01 or within 0.25 miles of “Big Kibbie Pond” in unit O02.
- k. To minimize direct impacts to foothill yellow-legged frogs, do not fall timber directly across the stream in units H11, H13, K01, K02 and L03.
- l. To minimize direct impact to yellow-legged frogs, do not allow skidding directly across the main stream channel in units H11, H13, K01, K02 and L03.
- m. Use screening devices on water drafting pumps and use pumps with low entry velocity to minimize impacts to aquatic species. A drafting box measuring 2 feet on all sides covered in a maximum of 0.25 inch screening is required.



*High severity burn area with no remaining soil cover.*

5. Protect beneficial uses of water through implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in accordance with Regional Water Quality Management Plan (USDA 2011) and the National BMPs for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (USDA 2012) and the following requirements:
  - a. Prepare an Erosion Control Plan for Forest Supervisor approval prior to ground-disturbing activities. Prepare BMP checklist before implementation.
  - b. Operations in RCAs:
    - Delineate riparian buffers around streams and Special Aquatic Features (SAFs) within project treatment units. Riparian buffer widths are described in Table 1.
    - Fell trees harvested within RCAs directionally away from the stream channels and SAFs unless otherwise recommended by a hydrologist or biologist.
    - Maintain or provide ground cover (e.g. maintain post-fire conifer needle cast; provide logging slash, straw, wood chips, felled or masticated small burned trees) within 100 feet of perennial and intermittent streams and SAFs to the maximum extent practicable to minimize erosion and sedimentation.
    - Exclude mechanized equipment between the near-stream roads that closely parallel both sides of Corral Creek in Unit L02 (1N01 and 1N08 on the west, and 1N74 and 1N74C on the east).
  - c. Road Construction and Reconstruction:
    - Maintain erosion-control measures to function effectively throughout the project area during road construction and reconstruction and in accordance with the approved erosion control plan.
    - Stabilize disturbed areas with mulch, erosion fabric, vegetation, rock, large organic materials, engineered structures or other measures according to specifications and the erosion control plan.

Table 1 Operating requirements for mechanized equipment operations in RCAs

Stream Type	Zone	Width (feet)	Equipment Requirements	Element	Operating Requirements
Perennial/ Intermittent and Special Aquatic Features (SAF: includes lakes, meadows, bogs, fens, wetlands, vernal pools, and springs).	Exclusion	0 - 15	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding*: Prohibited		
		0 - 50	Skidding**: Prohibited		
	Transition	15 - 50	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding: Allowed	Streamcourse Debris	Remove operation-created debris from stream channels unless prescribed for resource benefit.
				Vegetation	Retain remaining obligate riparian shrubs and trees (e.g. willows, alder, aspen).
				Streambanks	Do not damage streambanks with equipment and retain sufficient vegetation to maintain streambank stability.
		50 - 100	Skidding: Allowed	Skid Trails	Use existing skid trails except where unacceptable impact would result. Do not construct new primary skid trails within 100 feet of the stream.
				Stream Crossings	The number of crossings should not exceed an average of 2 per mile.
Outer (Perennial/SAF)	100 - 300	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding/ Skidding: Allowed	Skid Trails	Density and intensity of skid trails will gradually increase as distance increases from the Transition Zone.	
Outer (Intermittent)	100 - 150	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding/ Skidding: Allowed	Skid Trails	Density and intensity of skid trails will gradually increase as distance increases from the Transition Zone.	
Ephemeral	Exclusion	0 - 15	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding: Prohibited		
		0 - 25	Skidding: Prohibited		
	Transition	15 - 25	Mechanical Harvesting/ Shredding: Allowed		
		25 - 50	Skidding: Allowed	Stream Crossings	The number of crossings should not exceed an average of 3 per mile.

\*Low ground pressure track-laying machines such as feller bunchers and masticators.

\*\*Rubber-tired skidders and track laying tractors.

d. Road Maintenance and Operations:

- Maintain road surfaces to dissipate intercepted water in a uniform manner along the road by outsloping with rolling dips, insloping with drains or crowning with drains. Where feasible and consistent with protecting public safety, utilize outsloping and rolling the grade (rolling dips) as the primary drainage technique.
- Adjust surface drainage structures to minimize hydrologic connectivity by: discharging road runoff to areas of high infiltration and high surface roughness, armoring drainage outlets to prevent gully initiation, and increasing the number of drainage facilities within RCAs.

e. Stream Crossings:

- Design permanent stream crossing to pass the 100 year flood flow plus associated sediment and debris; armor to withstand design flows and provide desired passage of fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Keep excavated materials out of channels, floodplains, wetlands and lakes. Install silt fences or other sediment- and debris-retention barriers between the water body and construction material stockpiles and wastes. Dispose of unsuitable material in approved waste areas outside of the RCA.

f. Road Closures:

- Remove road stream crossings and other culverts identified as high risk of failure and posing a threat to water quality before a road is closed.
- Block closed roads to prevent vehicle access.

- g. Log Landings: re-use log landings to the extent feasible. Do not construct new landings within 100 feet of perennial or intermittent streams or 50 feet of ephemeral streams. Subsoil all landings when harvest/biomass operations are complete.
  - h. Skid Trails:
    - Use existing skid trails wherever possible, except where unacceptable resource damage may result. Locate skid trails at least 50 feet from perennial and intermittent streams and SAFs and 25 feet from ephemeral streams.
    - Install waterbars and other erosion control measures as needed on skid trails immediately following completion of timber operations.
    - Maintain/improve skid trail surface drainage following use by removing berms that concentrate flows.
  - i. Cable Yarding:
    - Fully suspend logs to the extent practicable when yarding over RCAs and streams.
    - Where logs were dragged along cable corridors, install waterbars and other erosion control measures as needed immediately following completion of timber harvest or before significant rainfall is forecast.
  - j. Water Sources:
    - Water drafting on fish-bearing streams: do not exceed 350 gallons per minute for streamflow greater than or equal to 4.0 cubic feet per second (cfs); do not exceed 20 percent of surface flows below 4.0 cfs; and, cease drafting when bypass surface flow drops below 1.5 cfs.
    - Water drafting on non-fish-bearing streams: do not exceed 350 gallons per minute for streamflow greater than or equal to 2.0 cfs; do not exceed 50 percent of surface flow; and cease drafting when bypass surface flow drops below 10 gallons per minute.
  - k. Rock Borrow Pits/Quarries:
    - Limit the area of disturbance to the minimum necessary for efficient operations.
    - Rehabilitate and stabilize sites after operations are complete. Where appropriate, install temporary barriers between the extraction area and surface waters to prevent sedimentation.
  - l. Servicing and Refueling Equipment: allow temporary refueling and servicing only at approved sites located outside of RCAs.
  - m. Burn Piles: place burn piles a minimum of 50 feet away from perennial and intermittent streams and 25 feet from ephemeral streams. Locate piles outside areas that may receive runoff from roads.
  - n. Water Quality Monitoring: conduct implementation and effectiveness monitoring using the Best Management Practices Evaluation Program (BMPEP) (USDA 2002) and the National Core Monitoring Protocols (FS-990b) (USDA 2012).
6. Forest Service Manual 2550-Soil Management-R5 Supplement (USDA 2012) and Forest Plan Direction (USDA 2010) provide standards and guidelines for soil management and are the basis for soil requirements to minimize potential impacts:
- a. If present, maintain soil cover, surface organic matter and soil organic matter consistent with the Forest Plan. If the existing condition is deficient, watershed specialists may prescribe activities to increase soil cover on sensitive soils or where accelerated runoff and erosion could pose unacceptable risk to resources as a result of the proposed action. These activities could include mastication or lop and scatter of trees less than 12 inches, a cut-to-length logging system, drop and leave, weed-free straw mulch applications or seeding with approved native seed. Generally, these treatments would only be considered in units with greater than 15 percent slopes, high Erosion Hazard Ratings and an existing or predicted deficiency in ground cover that would persist longer than one season.
  - b. Use existing skid trails and landings except where unacceptable resource damage may result (i.e. skid trails running on 40 percent slope). Limit disturbed skid trail footprint (main and branching secondary trails) to less than 15 percent of the unit area or to the existing disturbed area.



- c. Subsoil main skid trails and waterbar remaining skid trails prior to each winter season. Prior to unit close-out, subsoil and waterbar all main and branching secondary skid trails, temporary roads, and landings. Subsoiling may be excluded from areas of high soil sensitivity, such as shallow or rocky soils, when recommended by a soil scientist. Obliterate out-sloped berms.
  - d. Pre-existing skid trails and landings within units would be deep tilled to mitigate logging effects as designated by a watershed specialist.
  - e. Limit tractor skidding to less than 35 percent slopes unless a soil scientist evaluates operations on the steeper slopes.
  - f. Spread existing windrows within units following treatments. A soil scientist will evaluate spreading operations on slopes greater than 25 percent to ensure unacceptable erosion would not occur.
7. Consider habitat needs for sensitive terrestrial species and meet habitat needs for Federally listed Threatened and Endangered terrestrial species:
- a. In all units retain:
    - All hardwood snags greater than or equal to 12 inches dbh.
    - A minimum of 4 snags (in the largest size class available) per acre averaged across ten acres in mixed conifer forest type.
    - A minimum of six snags per acre in red fir forest type.
    - The largest size classes of dead and downed logs greater than or equal to 12 inches in diameter at the midpoint at a rate of 10 to 20 tons/acre.
  - b. Provide for a forest carnivore connectivity corridor for fisher and marten, linking the North Mountain inventoried roadless area west to the Clavey River, including the following proposed salvage units: L01, L02, L05, M1 through M10, M12, M13, M15, M16, M18, M19, N1 and N2.
  - c. Consider retaining additional snags and downed logs to meet habitat needs in Old Forest Emphasis Areas, Spotted Owl Home Range Core Areas, and forest carnivore connectivity corridor.
  - d. No harvest shall occur within Protected Activity Centers (PACs) unless a biological evaluation determines that the areas proposed for harvest are rendered unsuitable for the purpose they were intended by a catastrophic stand-replacing event.
  - e. Consider mitigating areas where roadside hazard treatments are within PACs and HRCAs by adding acreage to the PAC and/or HRCA equivalent to the treated acres of the most suitable habitat available.
  - f. Maintain a Limited Operating Period (LOP), prohibiting vegetation treatments and new road construction within approximately 0.25 miles of the activity center during the breeding season for California spotted owls (March 1 through August 15), northern goshawks (February 15 through September 15), great gray owls (March 1 through August 15) and within 0.5 miles of the known bald eagle nest (January 1 through August 31) unless surveys conducted by a Forest Service biologist confirm non-nesting status.
  - g. Conduct surveys in compliance with the Pacific Southwest Region's survey protocols to establish or confirm the location of the nest activity center for spotted owl, great gray owl and goshawk.
  - h. Within critical winter deer range and migration corridors, remove or pile and burn non-merchantable material to protect remnant oaks and achieve desired forage/cover ratios identified



*Severely burned trees and brush in the Rim Fire.*

- in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This includes proposed units L03, L06, L07, L202 through L206, M201, O201 and P201.
- i. For any new permanent road construction within PACs, HRCAs, forest carnivore connectivity corridors or winter deer range, designate the route as blocked Level 1 or Level 2 gated year round.
  - j. Avoid creating new landings and skid trails within PACs, where possible.
  - k. Avoid new road construction within 0.25 miles of nest roost sites, where possible.
8. Apply a registered borate compound to all freshly cut stumps 14 inches and greater in diameter to limit the spread and establishment of new centers of annosum root disease within harvest areas of mixed severity. Do not apply fungicide within 10 feet of surface water, when rain is falling or when rain is likely that day (i.e. National Weather Service forecasts 50 percent or greater chance); follow all State and Federal rules and regulations as they apply to pesticides.
9. Ensure consistency with Forest Plan and other direction for sensitive plants:
- a. Flag and avoid known and new occurrences of Sensitive Plants except as allowed below:
    - Hand felling may take place within *Clarkia australis*, *Clarkia biloba* ssp. *australis*, *Mimulus filicaulis* or *Mimulus pulchellus* occurrences only during the dry non-growing period (Table 2). Project generated slash may not be placed within Sensitive Plant occurrences.
    - Mastication and skid trail legacy compaction subsoiling may be conducted within *Clarkia australis* occurrences only during the dry non-growing period (Table 2). Do not track masticator through occurrences smaller than 0.25 acre. Minimize tracking in occurrences larger than 0.25 acres. Wherever possible, reach into occurrences with masticator head to conduct the work instead of tracking through.
    - In order to protect the habitat for the Sensitive Plants which occupy “lava cap” soils such as *Allium tribracteatum*, *Lomatium stebbinsii*, *Lewisia kelloggii* ssp. *hutchisonii*, and *Mimulus pulchellus*, off-road equipment and vehicles will remain on roads through this habitat type. Parking, equipment staging, equipment “walking” or landing, temp road and skid trail construction off road in “lava cap” habitats would be reviewed and recommended by a botanist to ensure Sensitive Species will not be adversely affected.

Table 2 Growing seasons and appropriate identification periods for select Sensitive Plants. The dry, non-growing period is the time when these species are most resistant to disturbance activities. All dates are approximate, varying with elevation, weather and site conditions.

Species	Growing Season	Identification Period	Dry, Non-growing Period*
<i>Clarkia australis</i>	December 1 - August 15	June 15 - August 15	August 15 - November 30
<i>Clarkia biloba</i> ssp. <i>australis</i>	December 1 - July 31	May 15 - July 15	August 1 - November 30
<i>Mimulus filicaulis</i>	March 15 - July 15	April 15 - June 30	July 15 - November 30
<i>Mimulus pulchellus</i>	March 1 - June 15	April 1 - June 1	June 15 - November 30

\*The actual dry, non-growing period will be determined by field observations year to year by a Botanist.

10. Ensure consistency with Forest Plan and other direction for noxious weeds:
- a. Implement the equipment cleaning requirements in the standard contract provisions for all contract operations and activities.
  - b. Where possible above 4,000 feet elevation, prior to use, manually treat dense infestations of weeds in areas utilized by project equipment/vehicles to prevent spread, if flowers or seeds are present on the plants.
  - c. Flag and avoid infestations of high priority noxious weeds during project activities. Manual methods such as hand thinning may take place within noxious weed sites if timed for before seed set.

- d. The Forest Service will designate the order, or progression, of unit completion to emphasize treating uninfested units before treating infested units to reduce the risk of weed spread from infested units into uninfested units. Clean equipment before moving from infested sites and prior to being transported from the project area.
  - e. Use certified weed-free mulches where available.
  - f. Obtain construction materials (crushed rock, drain rock, riprap, soil, etc.) from weed-free sources, where available.
11. Protect cultural resources through the application of Standard Protection Measures as determined by the Programmatic Agreement Among the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5), California State Historic Preservation Officer, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, and The Advisory Council On Historic Preservation Regarding The Processes For Compliance With Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Management of Historic Properties by the National Forests of the Pacific Southwest Region (Regional PA) signed February 2013.
12. Protect range resources:
- a. Avoid damage to rangeland infrastructure (fences, water developments, cattleguards) during project implementation.
  - b. Any serviceable/intact infrastructure that is damaged during implementation must be repaired to Forest Service standards.
  - c. Consider seeding to provide for site stabilization in areas adjacent to meadows where salvage occurs. Use only native, sterile or non-persistent weed-free seed.



*Trees impacted by the Rim Fire.*

### **Other Alternatives**

In addition to the Proposed Action, the EIS will evaluate the required No Action alternative and will likely consider other alternatives that are identified through the Interdisciplinary Team process and public participation.

### **Emergency Situation Determination**

In order to facilitate implementation of this project, the Forest intends to request an Emergency Situation Determination (ESD) pursuant to 36 CFR 218.21 (78 Federal Register 59, March 27, 2013; p. 18481-18504). Only the Chief and Associate Chief of the Forest Service may grant an ESD (36 CFR 218.21(a)). An emergency situation is a situation on National Forest System (NFS) lands for which immediate implementation of a decision is necessary to achieve one or more of the following: relief from hazards threatening human health and safety; mitigation of threats to natural resources on NFS or adjacent lands; avoiding a loss of commodity value sufficient to jeopardize the agency's ability to accomplish project objectives directly related to resource protection or restoration (36 CFR 218.21(b)). The determination that an emergency situation exists is not subject to administrative review (36 CFR 218.21(c)). If an ESD is granted, the project will not be subject to the pre-decisional objection process (36 CFR 218.21(d)).

### **Scoping Process**

Public participation is important at numerous points during the analysis. The Forest Service seeks information, comments and assistance from federal, state and local agencies and individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the proposed action.

The Forest Service conducts scoping according to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1501.7). In addition to other public involvement, scoping initiates an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This scoping process allows the Forest Service to not only identify significant environmental issues deserving of study, but also to deemphasize insignificant issues, narrowing the scope of the EIS process accordingly (40 CFR 1500.4(g)).

### Timeline

The Forest Service intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this proposal. The Forest Service will consider your scoping comments while preparing the draft EIS, expected to be available for public review in April 2014. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will publish a Notice of Availability for the draft EIS in the Federal Register. At that time, the draft EIS will be distributed to interested and affected agencies, organizations and members of the public for review and comment. Completion of the final EIS is expected in August 2014.

### Responsible Official

The Forest Supervisor is the Responsible Official for this proposed action. The responsible official will decide whether to adopt and implement the proposed action, an alternative to the proposed action, select one of the alternatives with additional mitigating measures or combination of activities from other alternatives, or take no action with respect to the Rim Recovery project.

### How to Comment

This project is subject to comment pursuant to 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B:

- Your comments are requested during this initial 30-day designated opportunity for public participation beginning with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register (expected on December 6, 2013).
- Only those who submit timely *project specific written comments* during a public comment period (see Timeline) are eligible to file any subsequent objection.
- *Specific written comments* are those submitted to the responsible official or designee during a designated opportunity for public participation (36 CFR 218.5(a)) provided for a proposed project (see Timeline). Written comments can include submission of transcriptions or other notes from oral statements or presentation.
- For the purposes of this rule, *specific written comments* should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider.
- Individuals or representatives of an entity submitting comments must sign the comments or verify identity upon request.

Comments may be: mailed to the Stanislaus National Forest; Attn: **Rim Recovery**; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370; delivered to the address shown above during business hours (M-F 8:00am to 4:30pm); or, submitted by FAX (209) 533-1890. Submit electronic comments, in common (.doc, .pdf, .rtf, .txt) formats, to: comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus@fs.fed.us with Subject: **Rim Recovery**. Names of commenters will be part of the public record.

### Information Contact

For additional information regarding this project, contact Maria Benech at the Stanislaus National Forest; 19777 Greenley Road; Sonora, CA 95370; or, call (209) 532-3671.

**Table 3 Rim Fire Recovery Proposed Treatment Units**  
The area was divided into logical blocks for reconnaissance and transportation workability on the ground.  
The lettering system begins on the north end ('A') of the fire and moves to the south end ('Y').

#	Unit	System	acres
1	A01A	Tractor	7
2	A01B	Tractor	143
3	A02	Cable	8
4	A03	Tractor	86
5	A04	Helicopter	21
6	A05	Helicopter	672
7	A06	Tractor	27
8	A07	Tractor	4
9	A08A	Tractor	155
10	A08B	Tractor	14
11	A08C	Tractor	33
12	A08D	Tractor	43
13	A09	Helicopter	66
14	A10	Tractor	112
15	A14	Tractor	7
16	A15	Tractor	23
17	AA01	Tractor	34
18	AA02	Helicopter	10
19	AA03	Tractor	28
20	AA04	Helicopter	25
21	AA05	Tractor	11
22	AA07	Tractor	14
23	AA08	Tractor	19
24	AA09	Helicopter	66
25	AA11	Cable	12
26	AA12	Tractor	4
27	AA13	Cable	12
28	B01A	Tractor	3
29	B01B	Tractor	9
30	B02	Tractor	60
31	B03	Tractor	18
32	B21	Tractor	4
33	B22	Tractor	27
34	B23	Tractor	100
35	B24	Helicopter	87
36	B25	Tractor	21
37	B32	Tractor	62
38	B33	Tractor	16
39	C02	Cable	132
40	C03	Tractor	39
41	C04	Tractor	14
42	C05	Tractor	10
43	C06	Tractor	4
44	D01A	Tractor	200
45	D01B	Tractor	1
46	D01C	Tractor	23
47	D01D	Tractor	13
48	D01E	Tractor	18
49	D02	Tractor	108
50	D03	Tractor	26
51	D04A	Tractor	32
52	D04B	Tractor	345
53	D05	Tractor	43
54	D06	Tractor	16
55	D08	Tractor	42
56	D09	Tractor	63

#	Unit	System	acres
57	D11	Tractor	107
58	D12	Tractor	408
59	D13	Tractor	60
60	E01A	Tractor	75
61	E01B	Tractor	719
62	E02	Tractor	112
63	E03A	Tractor	174
64	E03B	Tractor	157
65	E04	Tractor	72
66	E05	Tractor	10
67	E06	Helicopter	44
68	F01	Helicopter	135
69	F02A	Tractor	568
70	F02B	Tractor	34
71	F03	Helicopter	58
72	F11	Tractor	551
73	F12	Tractor	157
74	F13	Helicopter	142
75	F14	Tractor	158
76	F15	Helicopter	33
77	F16	Tractor	69
78	F17	Cable	12
79	F18	Tractor	51
80	F19	Tractor	12
81	F20	Helicopter	127
82	F21	Tractor	22
83	F22A	Tractor	7
84	F22B	Tractor	6
85	F23A	Tractor	138
86	F23B	Tractor	10
87	F23C	Tractor	1
88	G01	Tractor	106
89	G02	Tractor	5
90	G03A	Tractor	131
91	G03B	Tractor	119
92	G04	Tractor	24
93	G05	Tractor	23
94	G06	Tractor	23
95	G07	Tractor	2
96	G08	Tractor	52
97	G09	Tractor	43
98	G10	Cable	6
99	G11	Cable	28
100	G12	Cable	10
101	G13	Cable	19
102	G14A	Helicopter	6
103	G14B	Helicopter	6
104	G15	Tractor	58
105	G25	Tractor	60
106	G26	Tractor	24
107	G35	Tractor	3
108	H01	Tractor	4
109	H02	Tractor	9
110	H03	Tractor	3
111	H04	Helicopter	13
112	H05	Helicopter	28

#	Unit	System	acres
113	H06	Tractor	6
114	H07	Tractor	2
115	H08	Helicopter	26
116	H09	Tractor	6
117	H11	Tractor	94
118	H12	Tractor	40
119	H13	Tractor	226
120	I01	Tractor	35
121	I02	Helicopter	139
122	K01	Tractor	11
123	K02	Tractor	132
124	L01	Cable	61
125	L02A	Tractor	374
126	L02B	Tractor	715
127	L02C	Tractor	796
128	L02D	Tractor	257
129	L03	Tractor	31
130	L04	Tractor	79
131	L05A	Cable	9
132	L05B	Cable	17
133	L06	Cable	10
134	L07	Tractor	5
135	L202	Tractor	142
136	L203A	Tractor	152
137	L203B	Tractor	113
138	L204A	Tractor	55
139	L204B	Tractor	32
140	L205	Tractor	140
141	L206	Tractor	138
142	M01	Tractor	727
143	M02A	Tractor	110
144	M02B	Tractor	3
145	M02C	Tractor	10
146	M03	Tractor	2
147	M04A	Tractor	286
148	M04B	Tractor	4
149	M04C	Tractor	10
150	M05	Tractor	306
151	M06	Tractor	97
152	M07	Tractor	21
153	M08A	Tractor	98
154	M08B	Tractor	33
155	M08C	Tractor	11
156	M08D	Tractor	27
157	M08E	Tractor	3
158	M09	Helicopter	211
159	M10	Tractor	71
160	M12	Tractor	15
161	M13	Helicopter	11
162	M15	Tractor	28
163	M16A	Tractor	10
164	M16B	Tractor	86
165	M18	Tractor	58
166	M19	Tractor	27
167	M201	Tractor	50
168	N01	Tractor	732

#	Unit	System	acres
169	N02	Tractor	42
170	N03	Tractor	26
171	O01	Tractor	11
172	O02	Tractor	472
173	O03	Helicopter	46
174	O04	Helicopter	19
175	O05	Tractor	100
176	O06	Helicopter	33
177	O07	Helicopter	48
178	O08	Tractor	27
179	O09	Tractor	10
180	O10A	Tractor	14
181	O10B	Tractor	6
182	O11A	Tractor	27
183	O11B	Tractor	39
184	O11C	Tractor	15
185	O12	Helicopter	96
186	O201	Tractor	299
187	P201	Helicopter	185
188	Q03	Tractor	15
189	Q04	Tractor	7
190	Q05	Tractor	2
191	Q06	Tractor	19
192	Q07	Tractor	13
193	Q08	Tractor	42
194	Q09	Cable	18
195	Q12	Tractor	6
196	Q13	Tractor	74
197	Q14	Tractor	645
198	Q15	Cable	18
199	Q16	Tractor	61
200	Q17	Tractor	4
201	R01A	Tractor	362
202	R01B	Tractor	11
203	R02	Cable	36
204	R03	Tractor	32
205	R04A	Tractor	53
206	R04B	Tractor	41
207	R05	Tractor	10
208	R06A	Tractor	9
209	R06B	Tractor	24
210	R07	Helicopter	83
211	R08	Tractor	2
212	R12	Tractor	64
213	R14	Tractor	5
214	R15	Tractor	25
215	R16	Tractor	98
216	R17	Tractor	72
217	R18	Cable	100
218	R19A	Tractor	52
219	R19B	Tractor	12
220	R19C	Tractor	32
221	R19D	Tractor	129
222	R19E	Tractor	18
223	R20	Helicopter	101
224	R22	Tractor	28
225	R23	Helicopter	13
226	R24A	Tractor	41
227	R24B	Tractor	5
228	R25	Tractor	34
229	R31	Tractor	140
230	R32	Tractor	30

#	Unit	System	acres
231	R33	Helicopter	12
232	R34	Tractor	8
233	R35	Cable	26
234	R36	Tractor	75
235	R37	Tractor	25
236	R38	Tractor	20
237	S01	Tractor	34
238	S02	Tractor	135
239	S03	Tractor	168
240	S04	Tractor	284
241	S05A	Tractor	46
242	S05B	Tractor	28
243	S05C	Tractor	27
244	S06	Tractor	28
245	S08	Cable	81
246	S10	Helicopter	9
247	S11	Tractor	25
248	T01	Tractor	19
249	T02	Tractor	33
250	T03	Cable	29
251	T04A	Tractor	266
252	T04B	Tractor	904
253	T04C	Tractor	77
254	T04D	Tractor	9
255	T04E	Tractor	2
256	T20	Tractor	10
257	T21A	Tractor	3
258	T21B	Tractor	19
259	T22	Tractor	26
260	T23	Tractor	99
261	T24	Tractor	160
262	T25	Cable	44
263	T26	Cable	15
264	T27A	Tractor	1093
265	T27B	Tractor	953
266	T28	Tractor	44
267	U01	Tractor	795
268	U02	Tractor	65
269	U03	Tractor	347
270	V01	Tractor	20
271	V02	Tractor	17
272	V03	Tractor	35
273	V04	Tractor	15
274	V05A	Tractor	5
275	V05B	Tractor	7
276	V06	Tractor	9
277	V10	Tractor	50
278	V12A	Tractor	9
279	V12B	Tractor	16
280	V13	Tractor	160
281	V14A	Tractor	21
282	V14B	Tractor	383
283	V14C	Tractor	70
284	V15	Helicopter	61
285	W01	Tractor	51
286	W02	Tractor	226
287	W03	Tractor	23
288	W04	Tractor	85
289	W05	Tractor	51
290	W06	Tractor	63
291	X01	Tractor	21
292	X02	Helicopter	43

#	Unit	System	acres
293	X03	Cable	58
294	X04	Tractor	7
295	X05	Helicopter	33
296	X06	Helicopter	56
297	X07	Tractor	43
298	X08	Helicopter	20
299	X09	Tractor	5
300	X10	Helicopter	10
301	X100	Tractor	22
302	X101	Tractor	21
303	X102	Tractor	23
304	X103	Tractor	28
305	X104	Tractor	76
306	X105	Tractor	14
307	X106	Tractor	18
308	X107	Tractor	142
309	X108	Tractor	200
310	X109	Tractor	190
311	X11	Tractor	19
312	X110	Tractor	18
313	X111	Tractor	32
314	X112	Tractor	15
315	X114	Tractor	13
316	X115	Tractor	150
317	X116	Tractor	109
318	X117	Tractor	14
319	X118	Tractor	162
320	X119	Tractor	114
321	X12	Cable	23
322	X120	Cable	27
323	X13	Tractor	19
324	X14	Tractor	12
325	X15	Tractor	76
326	X16	Tractor/Cable	16
327	X17	Cable	51
328	X18	Tractor	19
329	X19	Tractor	4
330	X22	Cable	52
331	X23	Helicopter	353
332	X24	Cable	76
333	X25	Cable	297
334	X26	Tractor	75
335	X27	Cable	39
336	X40	Tractor	8
337	X41	Tractor	21
338	Y01	Tractor	132
339	Y02	Tractor	19
340	Y03	Tractor	17
		<b>total</b>	<b>29,648</b>

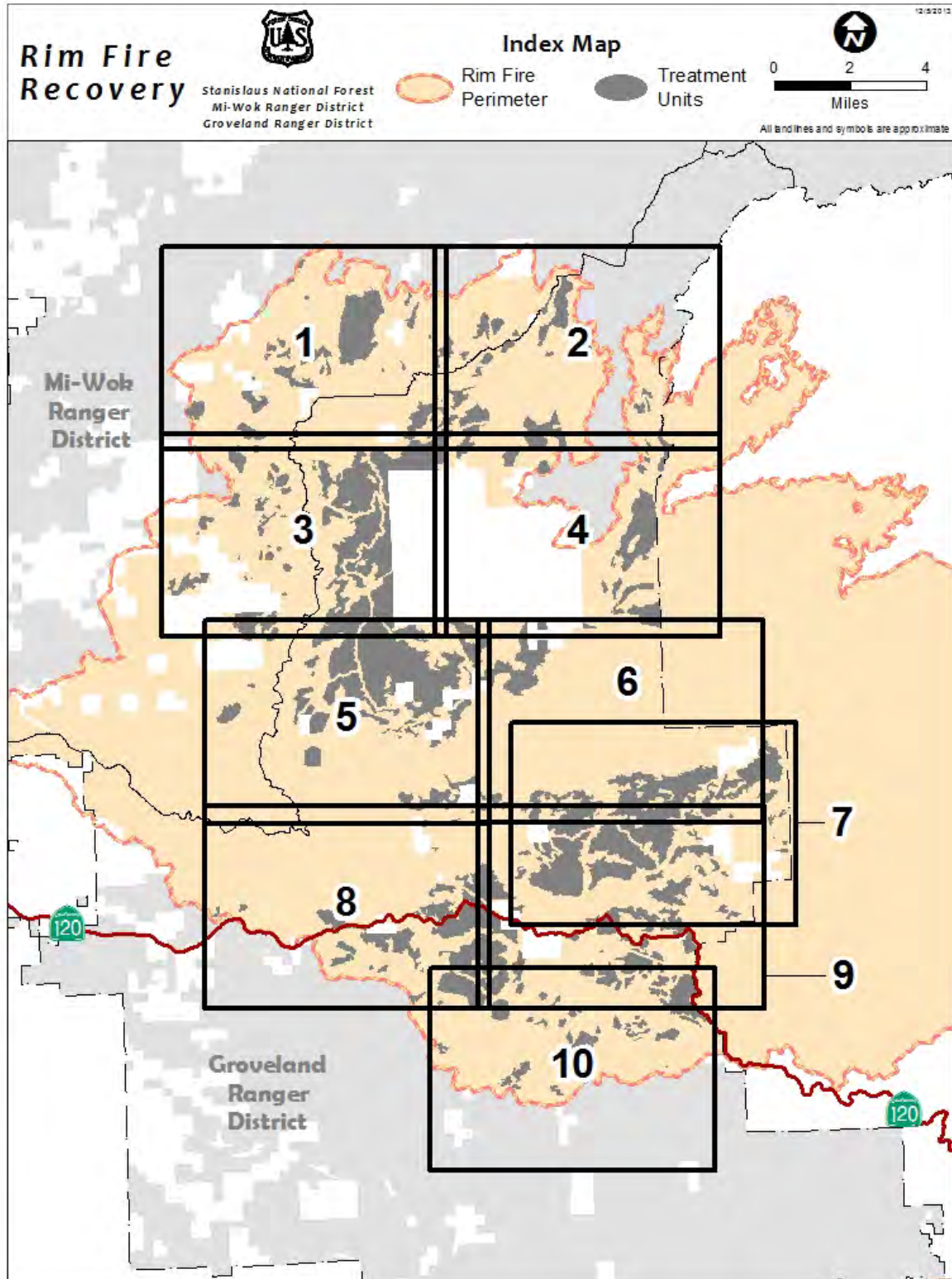


Figure 2 Rim Fire Recovery: Index Map  
Other project information and detailed project maps are available online at:  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa\\_project\\_exp.php?project=43033](http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=43033)