

Forsythe II Project
Changes from Draft Decision to Final Decision
April 2017

This is a summary of the changes made between the draft and final decision. This is in response to direction from the Objection Reviewing Officer, discussion with lead objectors, and internal discussions with Forest Service Specialist.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) held an objection resolution meeting with the objectors of the project on February 2, 2017. Following the resolution meeting, the USFS continued conversations with some of the objectors to work through remedies brought forward by the objectors. As a result of these meetings and the instructions from Jacque Buchanan, Deputy Regional Forester, the following are a list of changes from the Draft Decision to the Final Decision.

1. At the direction provided by the Objection Reviewing Officer, adopt a 300-foot no cut buffer for all private lands in which adjacent private landowners may complete defensible space work on USFS lands up to 300 feet from their structures with a permit from the USFS. USFS prescribed management activities will only occur in this 300 foot no cut buffer if the adjacent landowner requested the USFS to extend a treatment unit to their property boundary. Temporary roads and road maintenance will be allowed within this 300-foot buffer. Lands that are owned by a governmental agency, such as Boulder County and Town of Nederland, will not have the 300-foot no cut buffer (except for along Units 54 and 77 at the request of Boulder County). As a result of this buffer, approximately 653 unit acres have been dropped which equates to approximately 395 treatment acres.
2. Implement regeneration thin units (Units 84, 87, 88, 90a, 91, 92a, and 100a) within the no cut buffer, as supported by objectors through March email.
3. In response to objections, add language to clarify that the Forest Plan Amendment pertains only to this project for the duration of implementation.
4. At the direction provided by the Objection Reviewing Officer, include information to inform how the multiparty monitoring group will work and when the group will be formed. This group, composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, will develop monitoring objectives, monitoring elements, and monitoring frequency. It is expected to last through the implementation of the project. This effort is expected to be initiated within 4-6 weeks of the final decision.
5. After the final decision, unit level prescriptions and design will be provided to the multiparty monitoring group prior to contract finalization and award. This is in response to direction provided by the Objection Reviewing Officer.
6. Where feasible, the USFS will offer for bid, work packages (acres) appropriately sized for local contractors. This is in response to direction provided by the Objection Reviewing Officer.
7. At the direction provided by the Objection Reviewing Officer, estimate the number of acres that will be treated mechanically and manually based on slope, using GIS. From these calculations, estimate the number of piles to include in the Final Decision.
8. Recognizing that all units may not have trees greater than 14 inches DBH, and to acknowledge the value of larger trees to the public, the diameter cut limit will be adjusted based on the existing conditions. The maximum cut limit will remain at 14 inches DBH. Design criteria will be added to retain a percentage of the largest trees in each unit. This applies to thinning prescriptions not patchcut/clearcut prescriptions. This is in response to objectors concerns.
9. In response to objectors concerns and for consistency, align the diameter cut limit for the Meadow/Shrubland Restoration and Aspen Restoration treatment units. This adds diameter cut limits for lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir in Aspen Restoration units.

10. In response to objectors concerns, add design criteria to retain mixed conifer inclusions within patchcuts/clearcuts stating, “Retain all areas of mixed conifer inclusions ½ acre or less in lodgepole pine stands. If the inclusion is larger, thinning as prescribed could be implemented. An exception is cutting trees for skid trails and landings.”
11. In response to objectors concerns, decrease the conifer removal distance from the edge of an aspen stand from 50 feet to 30 feet.
12. In response to objectors concerns, favor the use of existing roads, where possible, as described in design criteria #2 under the Roads/Skid Trails/Temp Roads/Landings/Equipment Use.
13. In response to objectors concerns, add seedling survival monitoring in patchcuts/clearcuts to the final decision.
14. In response to objectors concerns, clarify the objectives for burning and how burn windows are developed.
15. In response to objectors concerns, add clarifying language to slash piles design criteria #11 which states, “In manual units, pile sound, existing and/or created slash material, 1” to 6” diameter and 2 feet or longer. Alternatively, any slash that must be moved more than 50 feet to meet minimum required pile size may be lopped and scattered to a maximum depth of 18”. Lopped and scattered material is expected to be a rare occurrence and most likely occur in very open grown areas where a few trees are required to be cut to meet spacing specifications, but not enough trees are cut to produce enough slash to create a minimum sized pile.”
16. In response to objectors concerns, add design criteria to exclude knolls and rock outcrops from treatment.
17. Based on new available information, remove Preble’s jumping mouse habitat from defensible space treatment.
18. Upon request of adjacent landowner, include Unit 50 for treatment without the 300-foot no cut buffer.
19. Based on all above changes, the table below displays how these changes affect the number of acres to be treated as compared to the Draft Decision:

Treatment Type	Draft Decision Unit (acres)	Final Decision Unit (acres)	% Change in Unit Acres	Draft Decision Treatment (acres)	Final Decision Treatment (acres)	% Change in Treatment Acres
Mixed Conifer Treatment	1,449	1,233	(14.9)	1,449	1,233	(14.9)
Lodgepole Treatment	1,482	1,104	(25.5)	445	331	(25.6)
Aspen Restoration	231	189	(18.2)	231	189	(18.2)
Meadow/Shrubland Restoration	45	37	(17.8)	45	37	(17.8)
Regeneration Thin Treatment	17	15	(11.8)	17	15	(11.8)
Defensible Space	2,032	2,187	7.6	2,032	2,187	7.6
No Cut Buffer – Unit Acres Removed from Treatment	0	653	-	0	395	-
Total Vegetation Acres	3,224	2,578	(20)	2,187	1,805	(17.5)
Total Broadcast Burn Acres	968	945	(2.4)	968	945	(2.4)
Total Treatment Acres	3,892¹	3,233²	(16.9)	2,855¹	2,460²	(13.8)

*Values in () illustrate a decrease.

¹ Both mechanical/manual treatment and broadcast burning will occur on 300 acres. These acres are not double counted in the above total treatment acres. The totals do not include defensible space acres.

² Both mechanical/manual treatment and broadcast burning will occur on 290 acres. These acres are not double counted in the above total treatment acres. The totals do not include defensible space acres.