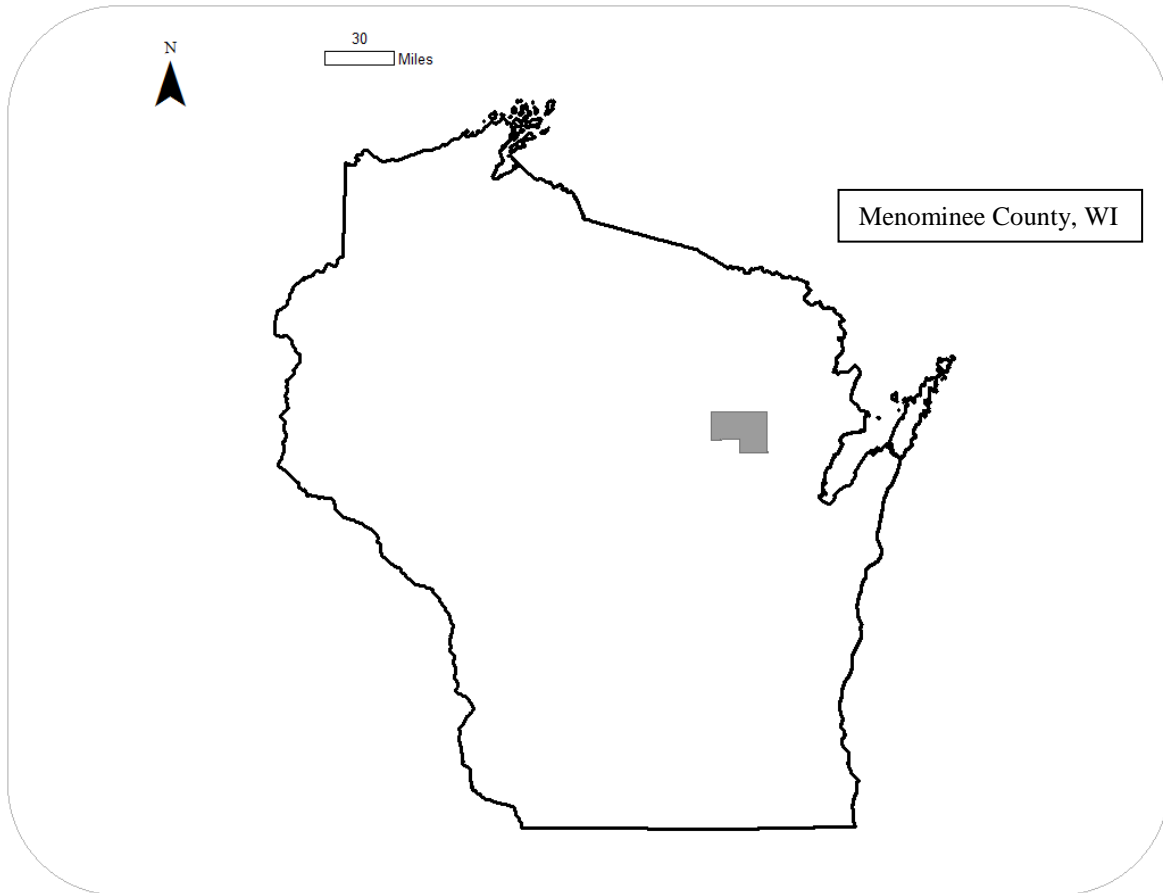


Fall/Winter 2020 Timber Management

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin forest lands

August 2019



Responsible Official:

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A. Purpose and Need

The purpose of this proposed timber harvest is to produce maximum quality and quantity of forest products grown under sustained-yield management principles, while maintaining the diversity of native species as stated under the Menominee Forest Management Plan. The need for this proposed action is to promote general forest health, produce revenue for Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE) and provide local employment.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action: Menominee Tribal Enterprises is proposing to conduct harvest on approximately 2,712 acres across the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's forest lands, located in northeast Wisconsin (Figure 1). Table 1 has a summary of the proposed harvests and their location within the Menominee Compartment system.

Prescription Number	Compartment	Treatment Type	Acres
118-20-20-02	118	Even-age Basal Area Thin	132
120-20-20-03	120	Even-age Basal Area Thin	172
233-20-15-01	233	White Pine Maintenance Thin	224
233-20-20-01	233	Even-age Basal Area Thin	725
311-20-01-01	311	Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	655
338-20-01-02	338	Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	804
		Total Acres	2,712

There are three different treatment types proposed across the 2,712 acres. Table 2 indicates the amount of acres by treatment type in descending order of acres to be treated.

Chapter 5 of the Menominee Forest Management Plan 2012-2027 has descriptions of Even-Aged and Uneven-Aged Silvicultural Systems.

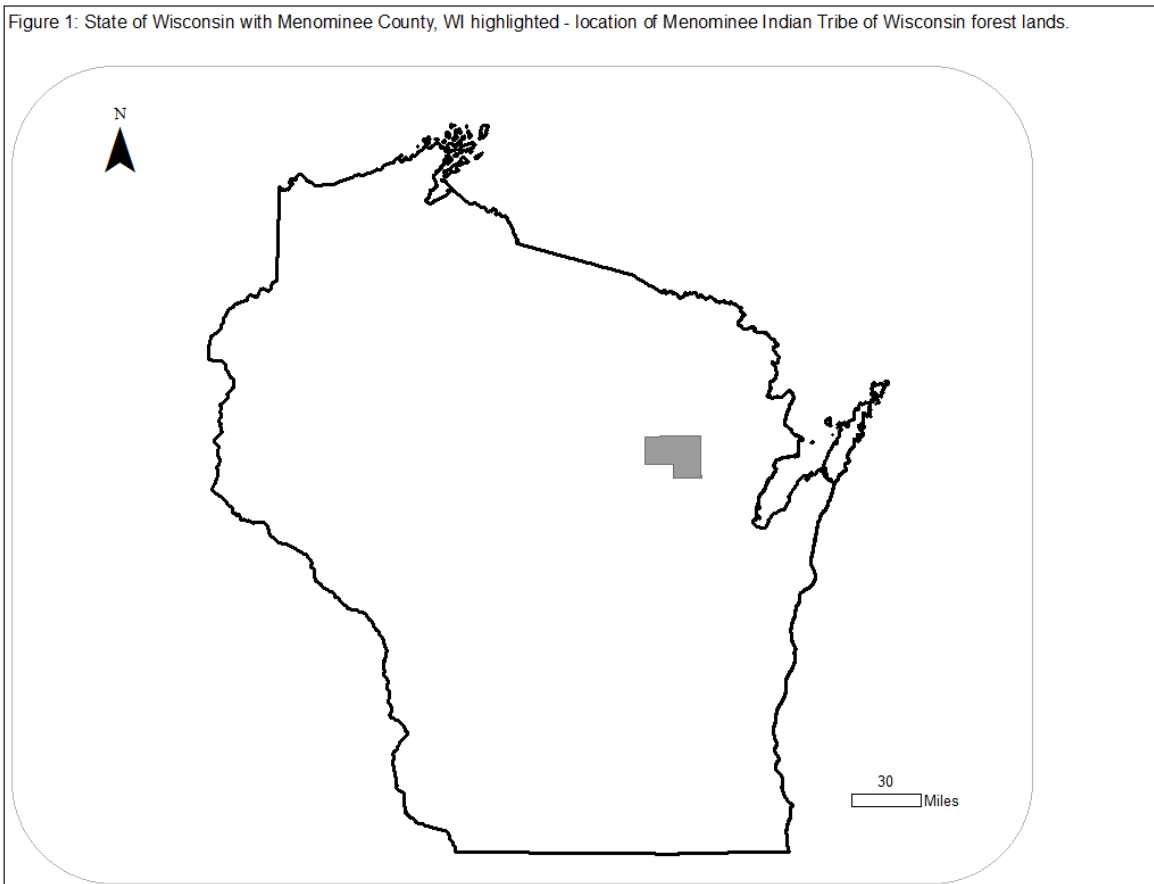
Treatment Type	Silvicultural System	Acres
Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	Uneven-Aged	1,459
Even-age Basal Area Thin	Even-Aged	1,029
White Pine Maintenance Thin	Even-Aged	224
	Total Acres	2,712

A brief summary each of the three treatments is below:

- Single Tree Selection – Group Selection: Harvesting sawtimber, maintain growth and vigor of released individuals, regenerating trees via canopy gaps.
- Even-Age Basal Area (BA) Thin: Harvesting enough undesirable trees from a stand to meet a retention basal area, while leaving the residual trees relatively evenly spaced or releasing specific crop trees.
- White Pine Maintenance Thin: Harvesting high-risk conifers to maintain stand health and diversity.

Appendix A includes stand by stand specifics for each treatment, including the location of those stands.

No Action Alternative: No timber harvest or other management actions are proposed under the No Action alternative for this project. The proposed treatments will not take place, however other forms of forest management will continue, under other NEPA documentation.



B. Effects to the human environment

i. Water Resources:

Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: Potential effects will be mitigated by the measures indicated in Appendix A for each prescription. Appendix A states that:

“All Wisconsin State BMP’s and Menominee Code Chapter 340 Forest Management and Development requirements are to be followed.” And

“Stream crossings will only be allowed on existing roads with approved crossings.

Follow current State of Wisconsin BMPs for water quality within single tree selection areas. Do not operate wheeled or tracked harvesting equipment within 50 feet of wetlands or waterways except on roads or at stream crossings, or if the ground is dry or frozen.

Avoid felling any timber into wetlands. If trees must be felled in such a manner, remove tops or slash from wetlands. Harvest equipment operating in areas of wetlands can occur where approved by the officer in charge if the area is dry or frozen.”

“Harvesting equipment must not take place within established canopy openings, in order to minimize damage to regeneration in these opening and to allow quality replacement seedlings/saplings to develop.”

“Harvest equipment operation must not take place on grades greater than 15%, in order to control erosion.”

See Appendix A for additional details.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects are anticipated as a result of the No Action alternative.

ii. Living Resources:

Forest Ecosystem

Action Alternative:

Direct Effects: At the stand and compartment level the effects of timber harvest will be temporary and short-term. No stands are receiving an even-age regeneration harvest; therefore no stands will reduce their canopies so much to have open areas larger than the group openings in the uneven-aged harvests. All treatments will temporarily reduce the overstory coverage, but the stands will generally remain the same, with similar tree ages, structure and classes, as well as shrub and forb vegetation layers.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: The management of 2,712 acres of forested stands will have a negligible effect on the overall forest ecosystem due to the scale of the Menominee forestlands and the relative lack of harvest intensity across much of that landscape. This type of forest management is typical across the Lake States and this is not a disproportionate amount of area to treat on the Menominee Forest in a season.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects are anticipated as a result of the No Action alternative.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Table 1: Threatened and Endangered Species in Menominee County, Wisconsin

Species	Status	Habitat
Gray wolf <i>Canis lupus</i>	Endangered	Northern forested areas
Northern long-eared bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Threatened	Hibernates in caves and mines - swarming in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During summer, roosts and forages in upland forests.
Karner blue butterfly <i>Lycaeides melissa samuelis</i>	Endangered	Prairie, oak savanna, and jack pine areas with wild lupine

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/lists/wisc-cty.html>

Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects:

Gray wolf: There are no known denning sites in the project area and this limited proposed harvest is expected to have negligible effect on gray wolves due to their broad range, and the negligible effect that this harvest would have on the forest ecosystem.

Northern long-eared bat: No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to the northern long-eared bat population are anticipated as a result of the proposed harvest, as there are no known populations on Menominee Reservation forestlands. Additionally, there are no known hibernacula, no known roost trees on Menominee Reservation forestlands. This meets or exceeds the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s mitigation measures for avoiding harvest activities within a 150 foot radius of known roost trees between June 1 and July 31 which is pup season; as well as avoiding year-round harvest activities within ¼ miles of known hibernacula.

Karner blue butterfly: No effects to Karner blue butterflies or their habitat are anticipated due to the habitat being prairie, oak savanna, or jack pine areas with wild lupine. This alternative does not propose harvest in those habitats.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects to the listed species are anticipated as a result of the No Action alternative.

i. Cultural Resources:

Action:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects are anticipated. The Section 106 consultation process has been completed, and cultural resource sites will be avoided during the project. If any cultural resources sites are found during treatment preparation or harvest they will be protected under Menominee Tribal Ordinance 5-22 and the National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act. Please see

appendix A for Section 106 documents.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects will occur.

ii. Socioeconomic Conditions:

The socioeconomic status in Menominee County, Wisconsin is below average. The monthly, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate as of June 2018 for Menominee County is 6.7%, which is almost double of the state of Wisconsin's rate of 3.4%, and the highest in the state by over 1%

(<https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIMENO8URN>, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIURN>). Per capita personal income in 2016 was just over half of the average in Wisconsin at \$27,907 compared to \$46,809

(<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PCPI55078>, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WIPCPI>).

In 2016, 33.1 % of Menominee County residents were below poverty level compared to 11.8% state-wide (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/S1701ACS055078>,

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wi/PST045217>).

Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects: The proposed harvest will provide revenue for Menominee Tribal Enterprises and local employment during the harvesting and processing of the wood. The overall direct, indirect and cumulative effects as a result of the proposed harvest for socioeconomics are expected to be a minor positive benefit.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects: No additional harvest and wood processing revenue and employment would occur as a result of this alternative. No changes to direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are anticipated as a result of this alternative from the current condition.

iii. Other resources:

Action Alternative:

Mitigation measures identified in Appendix A minimize the potential adverse effects to land resources. Negligible direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources are expected with mitigation measures in place.

No effects will occur to other resources are anticipated under the action alternative.

No action Alternative:

No effects to other resources are anticipated as a result of this alternative.

C. Mitigation Measures to Reduce Potential Adverse Effects:

See Appendix A for all mitigation measures required to implement this harvest.

D. Consultation and Coordination

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act:

Consultation took place with Tribal Environmental Staff and BIA Midwest Region Staff. Consultation consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been completed and cultural resource sites will be avoided during the project. If any cultural resources sites are found during treatment preparation or harvest they will be protected under Menominee Code Chapters 138 (Archaeological Process) and 340 (Forest Management and Development) and the National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act. Please see appendix A for Section 106 documents.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act:

Consistent with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, given the no effects determination was made for all known or suspected Threatened and Endangered species as a result of the project and proposed mitigation measures, no consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service was necessary. Any additional information found during preparation or harvest, including confirmation of maternity roost trees or hibernaculum for Northern Long-eared bats will be used to re-evaluate the determination before proceeding.

Updates to the Threatened and Endangered species list for Menominee County can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/lists/wisc-cty.html>

E. Contributors

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