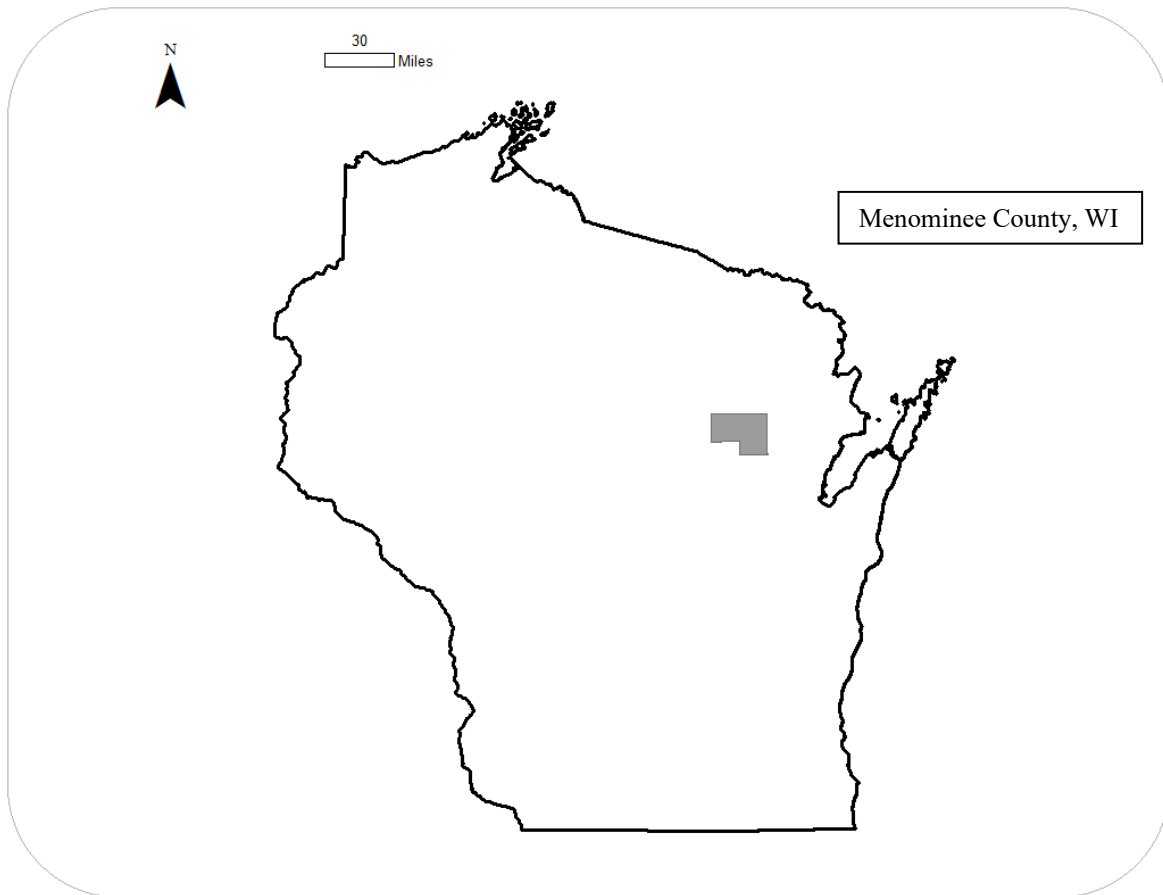


2024 Timber Management Environmental Assessment (EA)

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin forest lands

April 2024



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 2,213 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	Harvest season	Compartment(s)	Treatment Type	Acres
123-24-10-01	Spring / Summer	123	Clear-cut Conversion	39
123-24-17-01	Spring / Summer	123	Pine Barrens / Savannah	24
216-24-01-01	Fall / Winter	216	Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	225
216-24-20-01	Fall / Winter	216	Even-age Basal Area Thin	686
313-24-01-02	Fall / Winter	313	Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	807
999-24-02-01	Spring / Summer	115, 119, 210, 211	Even-age BA Thinning (Plantation)	71
999-24-05-01	Spring / Summer	229, 343, 344, 345	White Pine Shelterwood Initial Cut	68
999-24-06-01	Spring / Summer	209, 210	Intermediate Thin	115
999-24-09-01	Spring / Summer	110, 113, 118, 122, 209, 211	Clear-cut Natural Regeneration	178
			Total Acres	2,213

There are nine different treatment types proposed across the 2,213 acres. Table 2 indicates the number of acres by treatment type.

A summary each of the eight treatments is below:

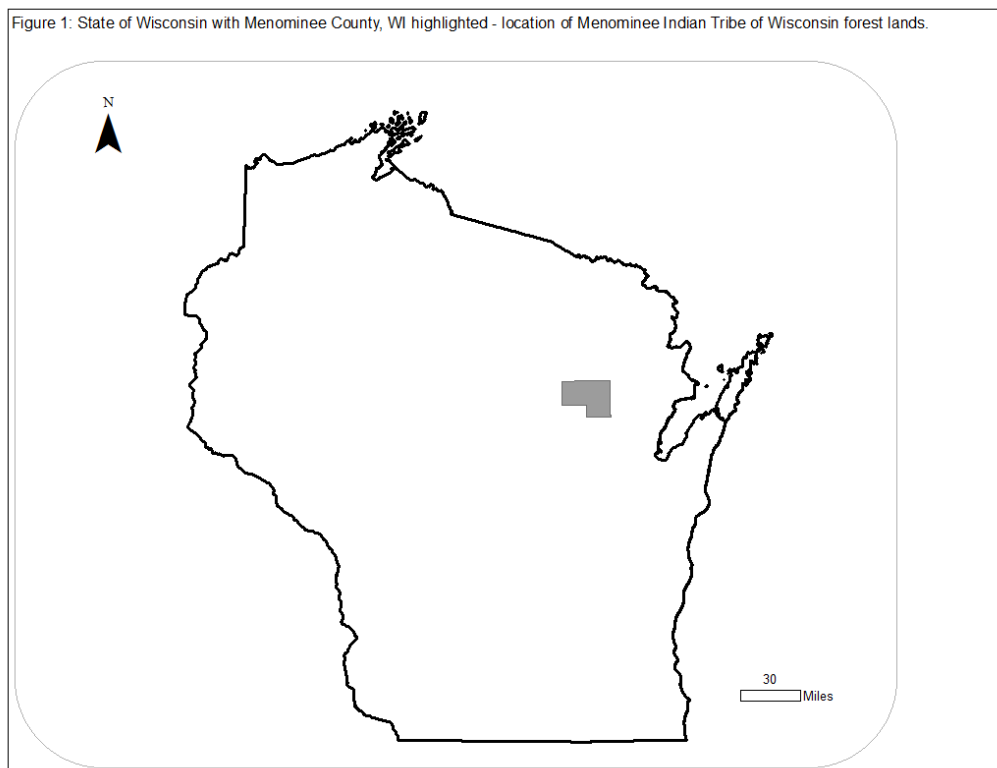
Table 2: Acres by Treatment Type and Silvicultural System		
Treatment Type	Silvicultural System	Acres
Single Tree Selection and/or Group Selection	Uneven Aged	1,032
Even-age Basal Area Thin	Even Aged	686
Clear-cut Natural Regeneration	Even Aged	178
Intermediate Thin	Even Aged	115
Even-age BA Thinning (Plantation)	Even Aged	71
White Pine Shelterwood Initial Cut	Even Aged	68
Clear-cut Conversion	Even Aged	39
Pine Barrens / Savannah	Even Aged	24
	Total Acres	2,213

- Uneven-age Single Tree or Group Selection: Harvesting sawtimber, maintain growth and vigor of released trees, regenerating trees via canopy gaps.
- Even-age Basal Area 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.
- Clear-cut Natural Regeneration: Harvesting all trees in an area, with an expectation that it regenerates to the same general stand composition.
- Intermediate 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.
- Even-age Basal Area Thinning (Plantation): 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 Shelterwood Initial Cut: Harvesting the understory trees and leaving dominant, healthy, seed-bearing white and red pine trees to 10-30 BA. Oak may be left as well, if there is not enough pine to meet 20-30% crown closure.
- Clear-cut Conversion: Harvesting of all trees, then perform site preparation, and plant to pine.
- Pine Barrens / Savannah: Most trees are removed with 2-3 pine or oak per acre remaining to simulate conditions pre-fire suppression. The area will be maintained with periodic prescribed burns covered by other operating plans and NEPA.

Specific portions of treatments:

- Appendix A includes stand by stand specifics for each treatment, including the location of those stands.
- In all treatments fresh cut pine stumps are treated with Sporax or Cell-u-Treat during the non-winter months. Those trees must be removed from the site within 2 weeks of cutting.
- Prescribed fire will be part of some prescriptions to reduce competition, prepare a seedbed for regeneration, or maintain an open condition within the stand.
- Spring and Summer treatments generally start May 1st.
- Fall and Winter treatments generally start September 1st or August 1st depending on equipment.

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:

- Harvesting equipment operation must not take place on grades greater than 15%, in order to control erosion. If this is unavoidable and the ground leaf layer is disturbed, proper structures must be constructed to minimize runoff and erosion.
- All BMP's and Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin E-code: Chapter 340-20 Limitations on tribal logging practices are to be followed.
- Stream crossings will only be allowed on existing roads with approved crossings.
- Use current State of Wisconsin BMPs for water quality as a guide. Follow Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin E-code: Chapter 340-20 Limitations on tribal logging practices. 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. An example would be seasonally appropriate crossings of wetlands in order to harvest trees on drier islands of timber inside of the wetland.

No Action Alternative:

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

If no action is taken to manage Emerald Ash Borer habitat, it will move quicker through the Menominee Forest, increasing the chances of swamping some areas, potentially causing an increase in run-off and other water quality effects.

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. Even-aged treatments covering 1,181 acres includes 309 acres of regeneration harvests including clearcut, shelterwood, and barrens conversion. These harvests have a few trees left on site while the new cohort grows. Another 872 acres are intermediate treatments and not regeneration harvests. They will keep mature tree cover until the regeneration harvest in the future. All 1,032 acres of uneven-aged 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 up to 2,213 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 year.

No Action Alternative:

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

If no action is taken to manage Emerald Ash Borer habitat, it will move quicker through the Menominee Forest, increasing the chances that some stands convert to non-forest types reducing habitat for forest dependent species.

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

List accessed 2023-03-28 using FWS IPaC tool (<https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>)

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 their 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.

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 Indian Tribe E-code: Chapter 340-20 Part C 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.

iii. Socioeconomic Conditions:

The socioeconomic status in Menominee County, Wisconsin is below average relative to the rest of the State of Wisconsin. The monthly, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate as of February 2024 for Menominee County is 4.8%, which is more than the rate for the whole state of Wisconsin's of 3.3%. (<https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIMENO8URN>, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIURN>).

Per capita personal income in 2022 was just over half of the average in Wisconsin at \$41,435 compared to \$61,496 (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PCPI55078>, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WIPCPI>). In 2022, 20 % of Menominee County residents were below poverty level compared to 10.7% state-wide in 2023 (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/S1701ACS055078>, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/wi/PST045217>). No other county in Wisconsin was greater than 18% in 2022 (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tables?rid=416&eid=342620#snid=342660>).

Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects: The proposed harvest will provide revenue for Menominee Tribal Enterprises; and employment for members of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and other residents during the harvesting and processing of the forest products. 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 because of this alternative. This would be a negative impact to the Tribe and surrounding communities, as logging and forest products processing in a major employer in the area. No benefit to residents or the Tribe will occur. No changes to direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are anticipated because of this alternative from the current condition.

iv. 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 Historic Preservation Office 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 Indian Tribe of Wisconsin E-code: Chapter 340-20 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 using the USFWS iPaC tool at: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>

E. Contributors

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Menominee Tribal Enterprises documentation of prescriptions.