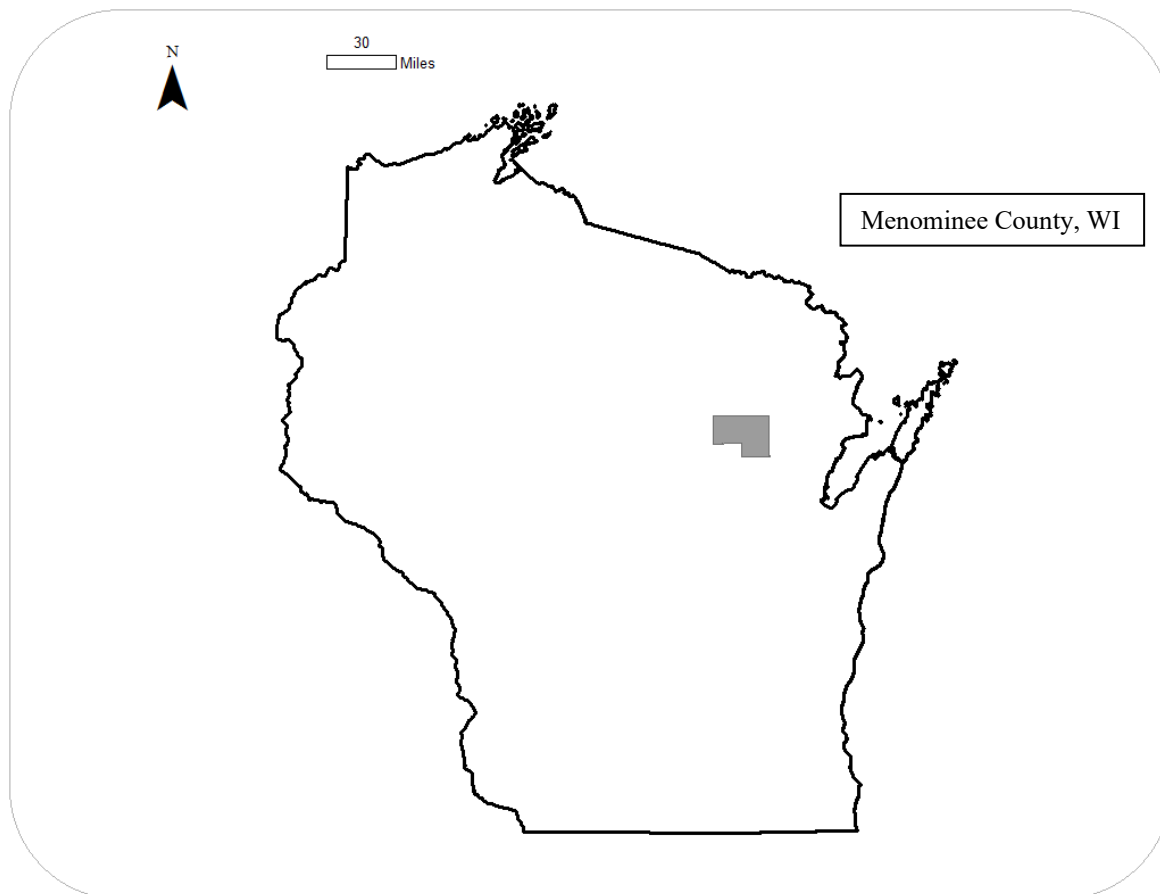


2025 Blowdown Salvage Environmental Assessment (EA)

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin forest lands

May 2025



Responsible Official:

Regional Director
Midwest Regional Office
Bureau of Indian Affairs
5600 West American Boulevard Suite 500
Bloomington, MN 55437

Prepared by:

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A. Purpose and Need

The purpose of this proposed timber harvest is to recover the maximum quality and quantity of forest products that were damaged in an April 2025 windstorm event. The need for this proposed action is to promote general forest health; reduce the possibility of insect and disease outbreaks; recover the value of forest products that would be lost if not salvaged immediately; to return these stands to the previous stand composition and structure; to produce revenue for Menominee Tribal Enterprises (MTE); and to provide local employment.

On April 28, 2025, strong to severe thunderstorms moved through Wisconsin. A confirmed tornado began just west of the reservation forest and traveled onto the reservation for approximately 1 mile. Winds exceeded 80 miles per hour and the tornado path was 65 yards wide.

Initial surveys indicate that the associated damage area from the tornado and associated storm is up to 19 compartments and almost 20,000 acres. There are small pockets of severe and moderate damage, as well as broader areas of light and scattered damage.

An initial survey of the damage was completed and up to 19,478 acres of commercial forestland are affected. Within this area, field surveys by MTE Forestry staff will be completed to identify locations of the salvageable areas.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

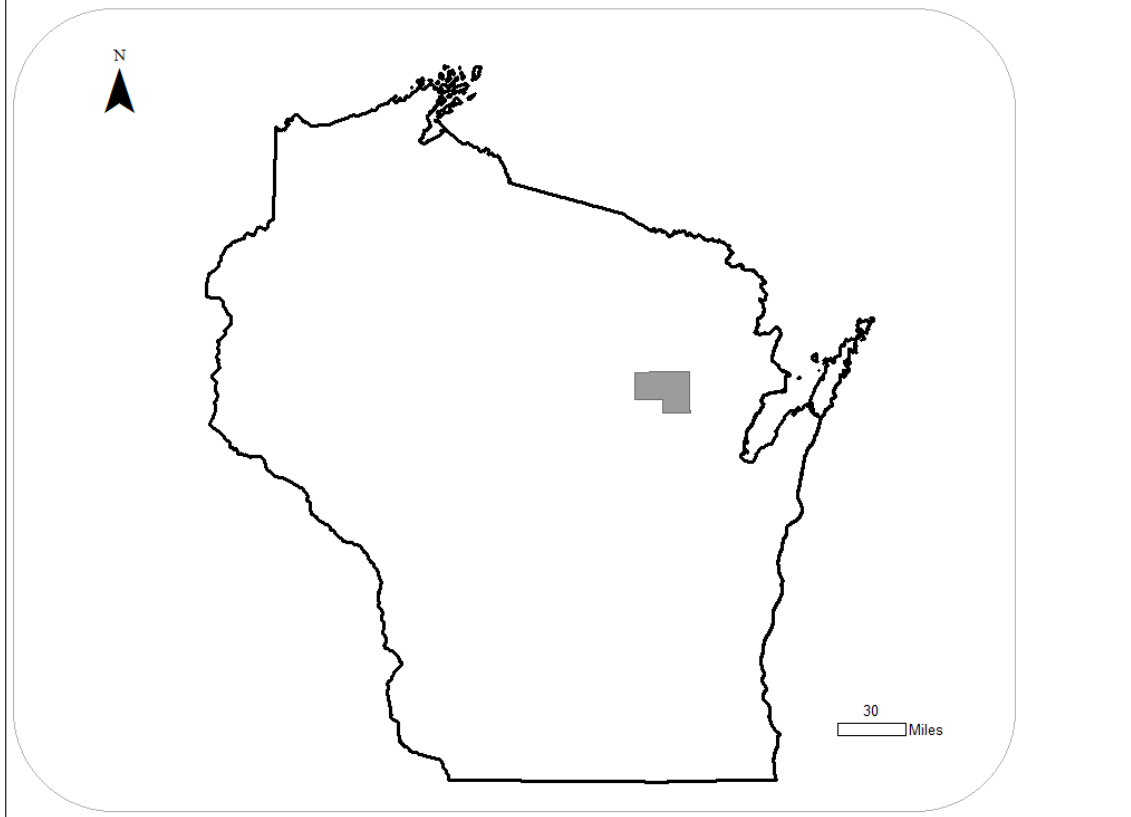
Proposed Action: Menominee Tribal Enterprises is proposing to conduct harvest on approximately 2,000 acres across the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's forestlands, located in northeast Wisconsin (Figure 1). Table 1 has a summary of the areas affected in the western part of the reservation and their number within the Menominee Compartment system. Appendix A has a compartment map with forested areas that are possibly affected.

Within the designated areas, remove all blown down timber, trees with torn out limbs consisting of greater than 50% of the crown, and trees with little potential for future crop tree status due to storm damage. Also remove partially uprooted trees or trees with considerable exposed root systems. If the damage from the storm is enough to regenerate the stand, all stems 2" and greater will be harvested.

Chapter 5 of the Menominee Forest Management Plan 2012-2027 has a description of salvage harvests.

Most of the stands affected by this blowdown event have had NEPA documentation completed within the last 10 years for traditional types of stand management consistent with the Menominee Forest Management Plan.

Figure 1: State of Wisconsin with Menominee County, WI highlighted - location of Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin forest lands.



No Action Alternative: No salvage 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.

Table 1: Acres affected by April 2025 wind event by compartment number.	
Compartment	Acres affected
312	799
315	857
316	1,104
317	1,306
319	709
320	1,951
321	734
322	1,566
323	1,120
324	837
327	1,201
328	421
329	479
330	792
331	952
332	1,268
336	2,262
337	298
338	822
Total acres affected	19,478

B. Effects to the human environment

i. Water Resources:

Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: No effects are anticipated due to applying the design measures indicated in Appendix A. 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 BMPs 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.

ii. Living Resources:

Forest Ecosystem

Action Alternative:

Direct Effects: At the stand and compartment level there is a minor effect. Salvage timber harvest will cause a temporary and short-term in reduction in canopy cover. Because the change in canopy cover and possibly stand composition has already occurred because of the windstorm, the structure of the stand will only be slightly changed once the harvest occurs by removing trees with damaged crowns. Many of the wind damaged trees will be salvaged, so there will be more canopy gaps across the landscape, but the stands will generally remain the same, with similar tree ages, structure and classes, as well as shrub and forb vegetation layers. More natural openings in stands may increase diversity in some stands, by allowing more light to the forest floor. The small amount of acreage with heavy damage, approximately 200 total acres, may have a regeneration harvest, which would reduce canopy cover for those areas, in smaller opening of 5-20 acres.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: The management of approximately 2,000 acres of forested stands will have a slight beneficial effect on the overall forest ecosystem. This management will reduce the possibility of a buildup of insect and diseases which may harm other areas of the forest not affected by the blowdown.

No Action Alternative:

Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects: If the portion of the Menominee Forest that received blowdown does not receive treatment, there may be a buildup of insect and disease that may travel to relatively healthy portions of the forest, increasing the likelihood of harming other areas of the forest and decreasing the availability to manage it effectively. The stand composition and productivity will be slightly affected since larger trees with larger crowns are likely to be affected by wind, and those damaged trees will not put on as much growth as healthy trees.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Table 2: 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>	Endangered	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 2025-04-21 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 no effect on gray wolves due to their broad range.

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.

iii. Cultural Resources:

Action Alternative:

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 of Wisconsin E-code: Chapter 340-20 part C. Buffer: archeological site protection, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Archaeological Resources Protection Act. Harvesting activities will be prohibited within any archaeological sites and proper buffers will be placed around known sites. Please see appendix A for Section 106 documents.

No Action Alternative:

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

iv. 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 2025 for Menominee County is 4.3%, which is more than the rate for the whole state of Wisconsin's of 3.8%. (<https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIMENO8URN>, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/WIURN>). Per capita personal income in Menominee County in 2023 was about 62% of the average in Wisconsin at \$42,070 compared to \$67,586 (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/PCPI55078>, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/WIPCPI>). In 2023, 21.2 % of Menominee County residents were below poverty level (<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/S1701ACS055078>, No other county in Wisconsin was greater than 17.5% in 2023 (<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 local employment during the harvesting and processing of the wood. The overall direct, indirect, and cumulative effects because of the proposed harvest for socioeconomics are expected to be a small positive benefit. The continued health of the forest will allow it to be managed sustainably into the future continuing to provide these benefits.

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. If the forest is not salvage harvested, certain populations of insects or diseases could spread and have a slight negative effect to the future health of the forest leading to a minor change in future harvest.

v. 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 because of this alternative.

C. Mitigation Measures to Reduce Potential Adverse Effects:

See Appendix A for all mitigation measures when implementing this salvage.

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 and tricolored 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 staff, including prescription document.

F. Appendix

A. MTE Prescription Notice #999-25-19-01.