

**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bureau of Fire Control and Forestry
Proposed Timber Harvest Summary
Name: Smith Road – Ashmere Lake**

Date Posted: July 18, 2007

End of Comment Period: September 1, 2007

Region:	Western
Recreation District:	Central Berkshire
Forest Management District:	Central Berkshire
State Forest:	Ashmere Lake
Closest Road:	Smith Road
Town	Hinsdale

Contact Information:	Kristopher Massini PO Box 1433 740 South Street Pittsfield, MA 01202 (413) 442-8928 ext. 21 kris.massini@state.ma.us
-----------------------------	---

Stand Description:

Stand 1: This is a highly stocked, maturing white pine dominated stand with hemlock and northern hardwood species mixed in throughout. The average size class of this stand is small to large sawlog. Northern hardwoods species include American beech, black cherry, red maple and sugar maple. The stand is roughly 16 acres and is approximately 70 years old. The area is former agricultural land and this stand is the result of that past use. The pine and hemlock are a desirable component to this stand and should be managed for their continued existence. This area is generally level and includes several areas which support wetland features (some due to human made features).

Stand 2: This stand is approximately 16 acres of low quality northern hardwoods that are approximately 60 years of age. This stand was formerly agricultural land and is a result of that past use. The stand is composed primarily of sugar and red maple, white ash, black cherry and American beech. The average size class of this stand is pole to small sawlog. This area is generally level and borders Ashmere Lake. There is an illegal ATV trail in this stand that comes from the adjoining private parcel. This trail does not appear to be heavily or recently used.

These stands encompass approximately seventy percent of the Ashmere Lake parcel. They are surrounded by Ashmere Lake to the north and private property on the remaining three sides. A boat launch access road divides Stand 1 from Stand 2 and an improvement to this road is planned by DCR Bureau of Recreation. There are several foot paths in Stand 2 along the shore of Ashmere Lake for fishing access. These trails also lead to several illegal camp/fire sites.

Aesthetic, Recreation and Wildlife Considerations:

Aesthetic: As mentioned above, the access road leading to the boat launch is the only vehicle road in this parcel of land. This road is maintained by DCR Recreation on an as-needed basis. Plans have been made to improve this road in the near future. Through this timber sale, the Bureau of Forestry (BOF) will make temporary improvements if this planned road project is not completed or will improve upon work done by the Bureau of Recreation. Along this road, logging debris will be managed according to the District Management Plan. In addition, large healthy trees will be retained to minimize the visual impact on the area. Views into the forest from this road will be improved for several years. The illegal ATV trail that runs through this property will be eliminated and access to the trail will be blocked upon completion of this project.

All stone walls within the project area will be protected during the harvesting of timber. Trees will be felled away from walls and roads as to improve safety and the aesthetics. There are no other historical sites in this area.

Recreation: The only formal recreational use of this parcel is the boat launch on Ashmere Lake and fishing from the shore. There are no formal or legal hiking, camping, mountain biking or ATV uses on this parcel. However, this piece is open, as are all DCR lands, for passive recreation. There is an illegal ATV trail (mentioned above) that will be eliminated as a condition of this project.

This harvest will not affect the boat launch or lake recreation. The landing for loading logs onto trucks will be located away from the parking area and off the road to ensure that access will not be blocked. The harvest area will remain one hundred feet away from the lake shore, providing a non-harvested area as a visual and noise barrier. Through this project, the BOF will assist the DCR Bureau of Recreation with the illegal camp/fire sites if desired or feasible.

Wildlife: There are no NHESP sites, mapped wetland, vernal pools or streams present in this project area other than Ashmere Lake. However, there are several small wetland areas along the edges of these stands, both artificial and natural. These areas will be protected according to the Massachusetts Best Management Practices.

Ample wildlife trees consisting of cavities, broken limbs and rot will remain for wildlife where they do not pose a safety risk. The addition of coarse woody debris will provide additional habitat for several forest creatures. There will be sufficient amounts of large trees along the lake edge for both current and future wildlife uses because of the 100 foot buffer.

Sale Layout:

This sale will use the existing access road leading to the boat ramp. Coordination will be sought with both the Public Access Division and the Dam Safety Bureau to determine if the repair and maintenance of the access road and parking area can be made as a condition of this project. Small road side landings will be used to reduce the foot print of the harvest operation. These landings can be used for parking after the conclusion of the harvest or will be restored to a vegetated state.

Skid roads will be kept to a minimum by utilizing small harvesting equipment. There is no anticipated stream or wetlands crossing and there are no legal trails to protect with a buffer zone. All skid trails will be graded and blocked from vehicle access upon completion of this project.

Silviculture:

Stand 1: The white pine stand will be treated using a three stage shelterwood harvest. This initial harvest will consist of a commercial thinning to reduce the stocking level to the B level, removing up to roughly 1/3 of the basal area. This will improve the stand by providing more growing space and nutrients per tree, increasing wind resistance and removal of competing hardwood trees from this stand. The second harvest of this stand (which will begin the regeneration process) will occur in approximately 15 years and will be planned to happen during a high seed year for white pine. This practice will ensure the stand retains the same softwood characteristics which are desirable for this area.

Stand 2: The hardwood stand will be treated through a commercial thinning. This treatment will reduce the stocking to approximately the B level, removing roughly 1/3 of the basal area. The goal of this treatment is to reduce the stocking level of the stand to give the remaining trees more available resources, thus retaining a healthy stand for a longer period of time. The harvest will target crowded, suppressed and unacceptable trees for removal. Trees to be retained will be the most vigorous and healthy regardless of species. An ample amount of potential wildlife trees will be left. In the future, this stand will continue to mature and may receive additional commercial thinning.

Park Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

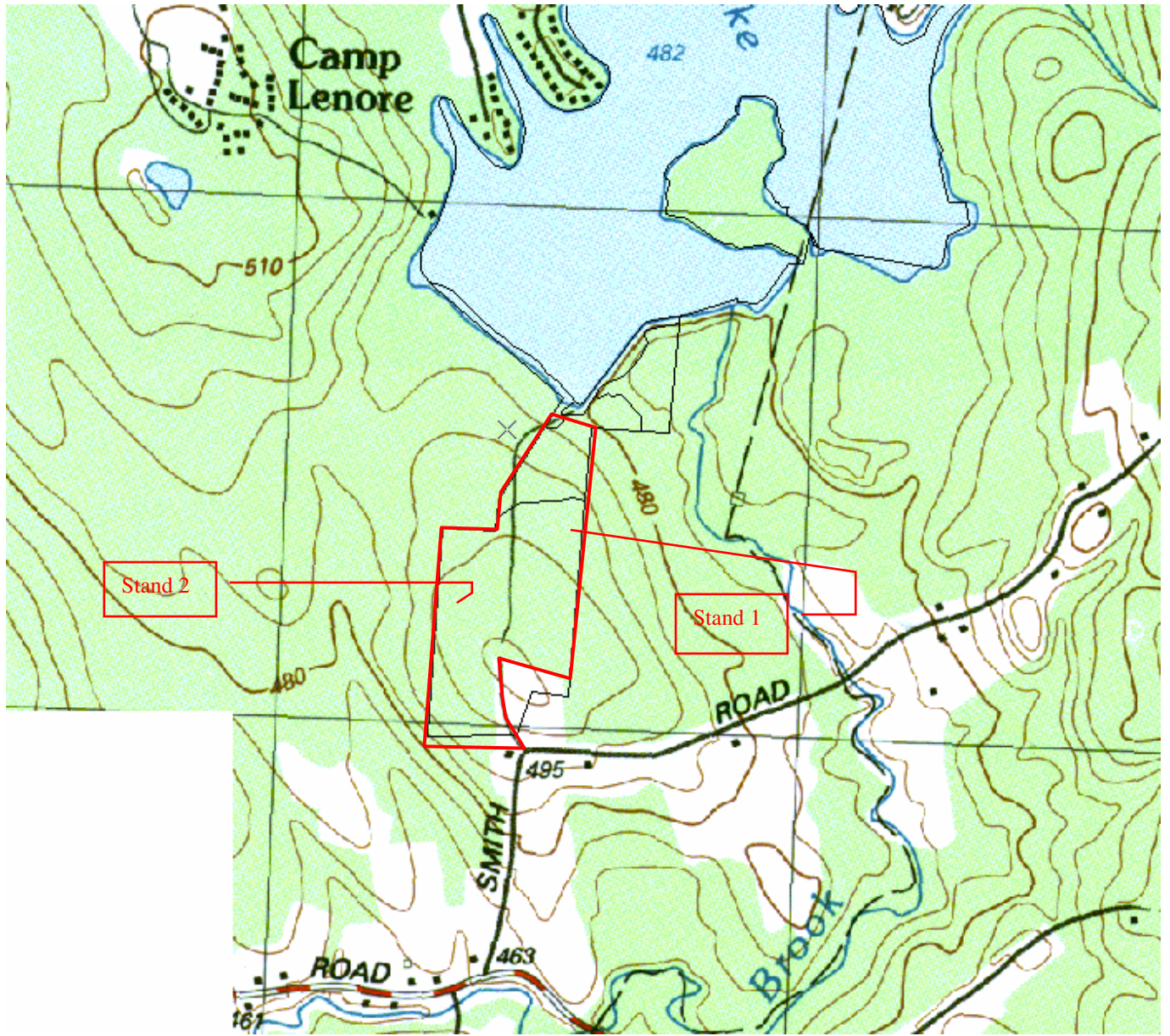
Regional Director: _____

Date: _____

District Forester: _____

Date: _____

Attached: Topographic map showing location of Forest Products Sale Area



Scale = 1:12000 approximate sale area is in red