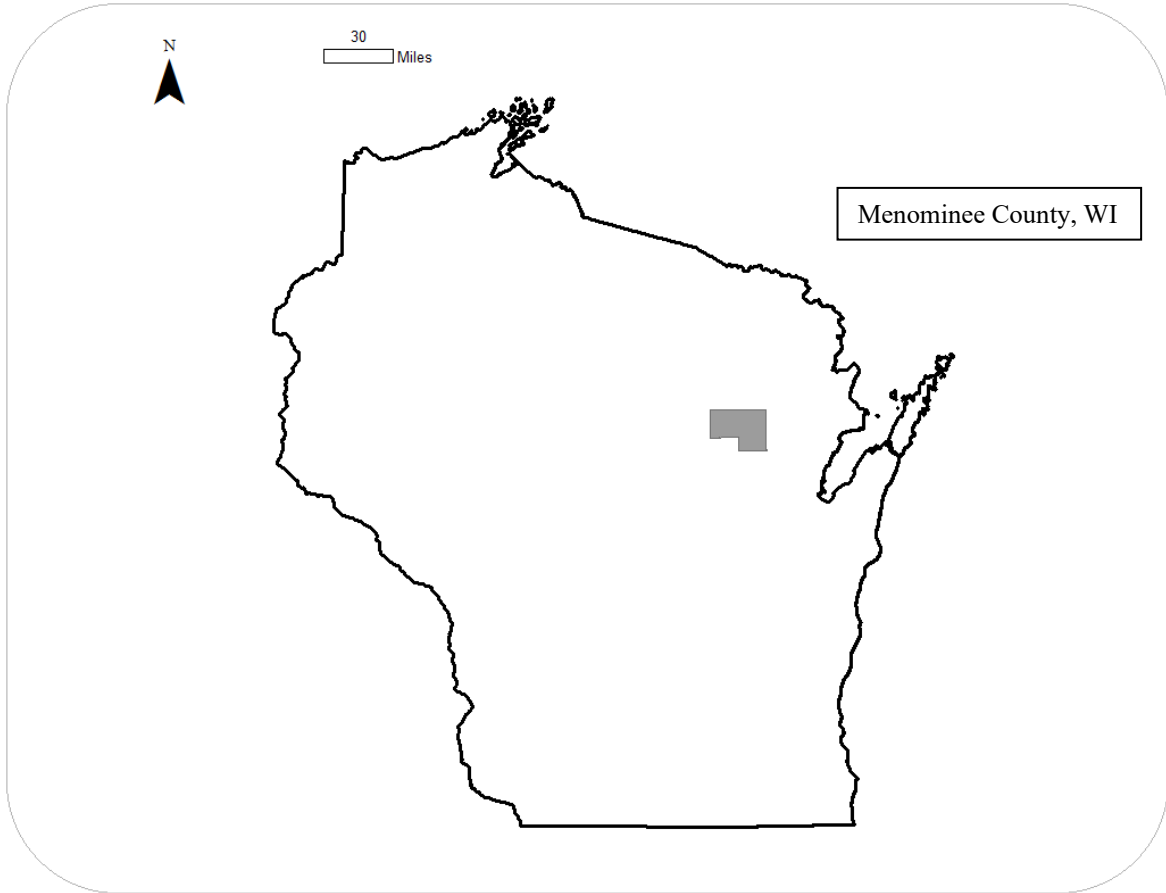


2024 Blowdown Salvage 2

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin forest lands

July 2024



Responsible Official:

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

Prepared by:

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

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 a June 2024 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.

At about 2:30 am on June 25, 2024, strong to severe thunderstorms moved through Wisconsin. These storms traveled through the reservation in an east-southeast direction with winds speeds up to 100 mph. The storm included a tornado and straight line winds with episodes of forceful downbursts that pushed over many trees. Included within the storm's path were areas of larger white pine, hemlock, oak and hardwoods. Several areas of the forest sustained moderate to heavy damage. There are numerous areas that have scattered downed timber as well.

An initial survey of the damage was completed and up to 1,105 acres within 6 compartments of the Wolf River corridor. Additionally, Compartment 223 has up to 3,508 acres of affected forests. There is a total of 4,613 acres in these 2 areas. This is in addition to the 45,780 acres covered under separate documentation from the same storm. Within these areas, the concentrations of the main storm severity will be ground surveyed and locations of the salvageable areas will be identified by MTE forestry staff.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action: Menominee Tribal Enterprises is proposing to conduct harvest on up to 4,613 acres within the Wolf River corridor and Compartment 223 within the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin's forestlands, located in northeast Wisconsin (Figure 1). Table 1 has a summary of the areas affected and their location within the Menominee Compartment system. Appendix A has a compartment map with forested areas that are possibly affected.

Oak wilt may be a concern within these affected areas, as vector beetle peak flight was predicted to be in full effect during this storm. Any above ground wounds on oak species during this storm are at high risk for oak wilt transmission. Some oak pockets may be treated at this time to prevent the spread of oak wilt.

An additional 10,000 acres across the southeast 1/3 of the forest has been identified for salvage under separate documentation.

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.

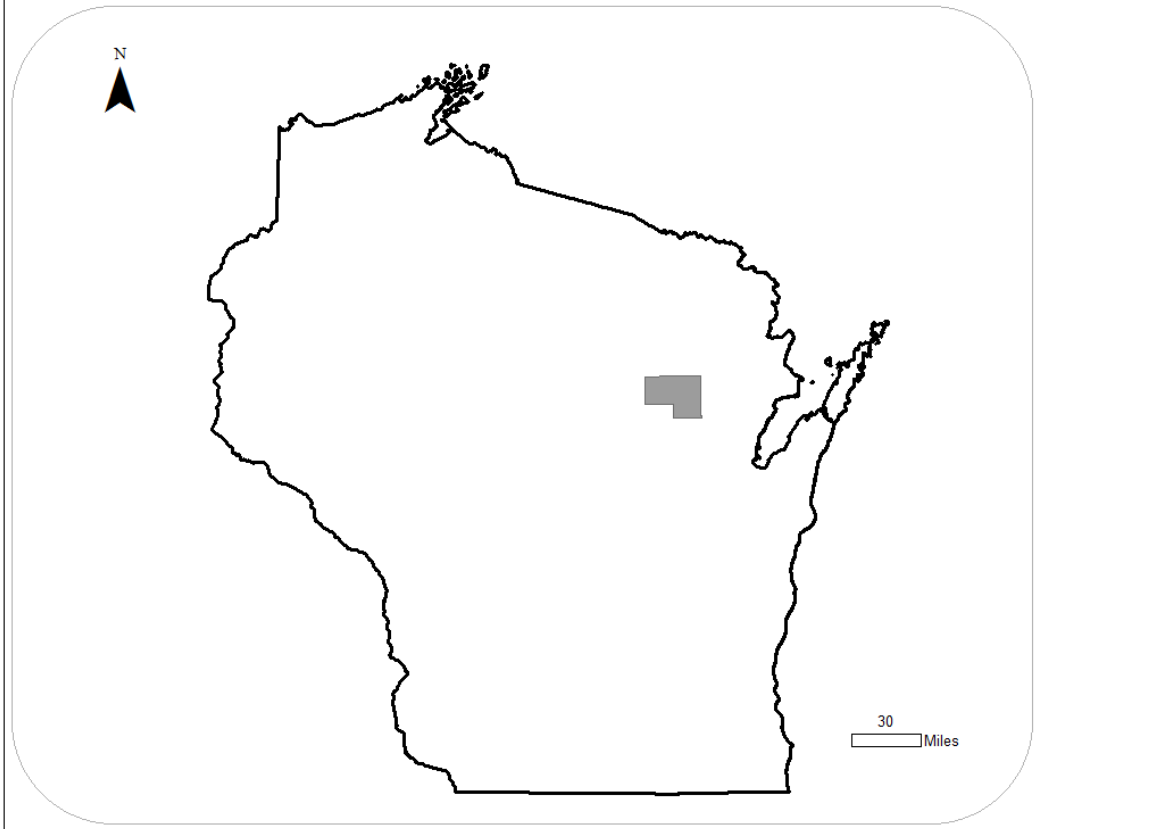
Chapter 5 of the Menominee Forest Management Plan 2012-2027 has a description of salvage harvests.

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.

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 June 2024 wind event by compartment number.	
Compartment	Acres affected
116	105
117	232
120	182
121	170
215	347
222	68
Wolf River Corridor Sub-Total	1,105
223	3,508
Total Acres affected	4,613

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



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. Appendix A states that:

- 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 the effects of a salvage timber harvest will be temporary and short-term. Because the stand damage due to wind has already occurred, the structure of the stand will only be slightly changed. Many of the wind damaged trees will be salvaged, so there will be fewer areas of trees down 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.

Indirect and Cumulative Effects: The management of approximately 10,000 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 economically 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 economically harming other areas of the forest and decreasing the availability to manage it effectively.

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>	Endangered	Hibernates in caves and mines - swarming in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During summer, roosts and forages in upland forests.
Tricolored bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	Proposed 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

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 and tricolored 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.

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 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 (the most recent year available) 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 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 positive benefit. The continued health of the forest will allow it to be managed 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.

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 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

Sean Maiers, Timber Sales Forester, BIA, Midwest Region

William Kurtz, Archaeologist and NEPA Coordinator, BIA, Midwest Region

Menominee Tribal Enterprises staff, including prescription document.

F. Appendix

A. MTE Prescription Notices and Treatment Notices #999-24-19-02 and #999-24-19-03.