

INTRODUCTION

“Special forest products” are products that are removed from public lands (USFS or BLM, for the purposes of the DLMP/DEIS) other than saw logs, house logs, minerals, rocks, water, soil, animals, or animal parts for commercial, personal, Native American tribal, educational, and/or scientific purposes (FSH 2409.18_80-2002). Table 3.13.1 lists common special forest products for the planning area.

Table 3.13.1 – Special Forest Products in the SJPL Resource Area

SPECIAL FOREST PRODUCT	MOST COMMON SPECIES	PERSONAL USE	COMMERCIAL USE	EDUCATIONAL USE
Firewood	Dead, Live Conifer, Gambel Oak, Aspen	X	X	
Christmas Trees	White Fir, Pinyon	X	X	
Transplants	White Fir, Aspen	X	X	
Tipi Poles	White Fir, Spruce, Douglas Fir	X	X	X
Corral Poles	Aspen, Ponderosa Pine	X	X	
Walking Sticks	Aspen	X		
Medicinal Plants	Osha, Arnica, Oregon Grape Root	X	X	X
Herbarium Specimens	Common Vascular Plants			X
Native Seeds	Grasses, Wildflowers, Shrubs	X	X	X
Dry Cones	Ponderosa Pine	X		
Boughs	Douglas Fir, White Fir	X	X	
Green Cones for Seed	White Fir, Blue Spruce		X	
Mushrooms	Boletus, Chanterelles, Morels, Puffballs	X		
Bark Chips	Pine, Juniper	X		
Fence Posts	Utah And Rocky Mountain Juniper	X	X	
Burls And Decorative Wood	Aspen, Juniper	X	X	
Berries	Chokecherry, Serviceberry, Raspberry	X		
Nuts	Pinyon	X		
Fence Stays	Aspen, Gambel Oak	X		

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

LAWS

Special forest products must be sold in a manner that maintains the products on a sustainable basis (FSH 2409.18-2002-7). All permits and contracts require the ethical harvesting of all such product in order to ensure sustainability. (Additional information regarding the ethical harvesting of special forest products within the planning area is available to the public.)

DESIGN CRITERIA

Management guidelines and design criteria describe the environmental protection measures that would be applied to all of the alternatives at the project level in order to protect, enhance, and, where appropriate, improve resources related to special forest products. Guidelines and design criteria are presented in Part 3 of Volume 2 of the DLMP/DEIS.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Existing Conditions and Trends

Special forest products removed from the planning area are categorized into two types:

- **Convertible Products:** Convertible special forest products are products from timber that can be measured in cubic feet.
- **Non-Convertible Products:** Non-convertible special forest products are botanical products that cannot be measured in cubic feet of wood.

Convertible Products

Currently, all commercial uses of special forest products are regulated by permit or contract. Personal use of convertible products requires a “free-use” or “personal-use” permit (requiring a minimum \$20.00 fee), except for firewood and Christmas trees. There is a one-cord minimum (which requires a \$10.00/cord fee) for firewood permits. Christmas trees are sold for \$8.00 a tree. Non-convertible products for personal use that require a free-use or a personal-use permit (also requiring a minimum \$20.00 fee) include transplants, seeds, and boughs. Some non-convertible products collected for personal use in small quantities do not require a permit. Products collected for educational purposes require an administrative or free-use permit.

Within the planning area, as administered by the SJPLC, all convertible products are, and would continue to be, monitored and inventoried through the timber and fuels programs (with stand exam and cruise information developed in order to monitor tree density and product size).

Non-Convertible Products

Non-convertible (botanical) products are usually not collected for large commercial purposes; therefore, little impact may be expected from the minor amounts of harvesting or collecting that occurs.

Harvesting of the fruiting bodies of mushrooms would not impact the mycelium (the vegetative part of a fungus) that occurs underground, unless compaction or ground disturbance occurs as part of the harvesting process. This harvesting has not been an issue within the planning area.

Collection of seed heads, cones, berries, leaves, or boughs would not limit the populations of the plants or trees, unless ethical harvesting guidelines are not followed. Currently, all permits and contracts require that portions of all populations or seed caches remain undisturbed in order to ensure sustainability. Harvesting practices that remove whole plants (including roots) may result in the greatest potential for adverse impacts.

Osha (*Ligusticum porteri*) is a higher-elevation plant collected for medicinal purposes. The entire plant is dug up, and the roots are then used in the preparation of medicines. This plant is traditionally used by Native Americans, as well as and by local Hispanics. Some pharmaceutical companies (local, as well as foreign), and local herbal remedy businesses, sell Osha. Osha is extremely difficult to cultivate and is almost always harvested in the wild.

United Plant Savers has listed Osha as a species of concern. It has become locally extinct in some of its former range. Due to the lack of information regarding the biology of this plant, and the concerns over what is a sustainable harvest, the Denver Botanical Gardens and the Medicinal Plant Working Group have begun monitoring Osha on some plots within the Rio Grande National Forest. In conjunction with this project, the SJPLC has developed a few plots within the planning area in order to verify the results from the Rio Grande study, and to develop guidelines for the sustainable harvesting of Osha.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS

Impacts Related to Convertible Products

The impacts related to of the personal use convertible products are negligible, and are dispersed over a wide area. Generally, The collection of convertible products will benefit the public. It may also help to reduce, incrementally, stand density and hazardous fuels within the planning area. Most of the collection of convertible forest products would continue to occur near the road system that is open to the public. Alternatives that include no new oil and gas leases would further reduce the effects since new road construction and the access to special forest products would be the most limited.

Within the planning area, all convertible products would be monitored and inventoried through the timber and fuels programs (with stand exam and cruise Information developed in order to monitor tree density and product size).

DLMP/DEIS Alternatives: The environmental impacts are similar under all of the alternatives. Alternative D will result in the greatest impact. Alternative C will result in the least impact. Even between these two alternatives, however, the differences are negligible, with the primary difference being the potential amount of open roads.

Non-Convertible Products

Within the planning area, non-convertible products are usually not collected for large commercial purposes; therefore, little impact is expected from the minor amounts of harvesting or collecting that occurs.

Harvesting of the fruiting bodies of mushrooms would not impact the mycelium that occurs underground, unless compaction or ground disturbance occurs as part of the harvesting process. This has not been an issue within the planning area.

Collection of seed heads, cones, berries, leaves, or boughs would not limit the populations of the plants or trees, unless ethical harvesting guidelines are not followed. All permits and contracts would continue to require that portions of all populations or seed caches remain undisturbed in order to ensure sustainability. Harvesting practices that remove whole plants (including roots) will result in the greatest potential for impacts. Alternatives that include no new oil and gas leases would further reduce the effects since new road construction and the access to special forest products would be the most limited.

The collection of non-convertible forest products may continue to be very limited in distribution and in quantity. Currently, there is no threat to any of the species collected at this level of collection; however, as human population increases and demand climbs, threats to local populations may become more evident. Additional information would be needed in order to determine the factors that need to be considered in monitoring use.

DLMP/DEIS Alternatives: The environmental impacts may be similar under all of the alternatives. Alternative D may result in the greatest potential impacts. Alternative C may result in the least potential impacts. Currently (as under Alternative A), the sustainable harvesting of Osha is occurring within the planning area. However, future demands may exceed supply outside of Wilderness Areas and Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). There will be no difference between the alternatives concerning Osha harvesting; sustainable levels may be maintained under all of the alternatives.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

In relation to special forest products, no significant cumulative impacts were identified under any of the alternatives.