



Forest
Service

Sequoia National Forest and
Giant Sequoia National Monument
Kern River Ranger District

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File Code: 1950/2400
Route To:

Date: NOV 17 2017

Subject: ManTech Willow Cutting (2018)

To: Kevin B. Elliott, Forest Supervisor

From: Phil DeSenze, Acting District Ranger 

I have determined the ManTech Willow Cutting (2018) Permit allowing the use of National Forest System land to for special forest products falls within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) that may be excluded from environmental documentation. The particular category is found at FSH 1909.15, Chapter 32.12 (8) Categories Established by the Chief – *Approve/modify/continue less than one year Special Use Permit [36 CFR 220.6(d)(8)]*.

This category is appropriate because the permit authorizes harvest of special forest products for less than one year. This is a reissuance of a permit for collecting cuttings initiated in 2016 and 2017. The current cutting will be permitted under a 2400-1 contract and charged a fair market value base on commercially available willow as documented in the attached cost assessment. Attached is a checklist completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documenting there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with the project necessitating preparing an environmental analysis or environmental impact statement.

enclosure



NEPA COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST
internal use only

**Sequoia National Forest
Kern River Ranger District**

Name of Project: ManTech Willow Cutting (2018)

Purpose and Need (Why here and why now): The purpose of the project is collection of willow cuttings for site restoration on Edwards Airforce Base. ManTech is contracted by the U.S. Air Force to conduct habitat restoration at Edwards Air Force Base. As part of this restoration effort, ManTech biologists are to install willow cuttings to create and improve habitat for sensitive species, including the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and the federally threatened western yellow-billed cuckoo. Collecting from the main fork of the Kern River and Isabella Lake will promote genetic diversity while collecting from an area with similar soil alkalinity to increase survivorship of plantings. Willow cuttings must be collected and planted during the winter when dormant to ensure successful regeneration and rooting. Winter cutting will also reduce potential impacts to nesting birds.

Proposed Action (who, what, when, where and how):

The proposed action is to collect approximately 600 willow cuttings from the Kern River Ranger District. Some collection is proposed along the Upper Kern River. A second collection area on the Isabella Lake bottom is approximately 690 acres and covers the area from Camp 9 north to the east end of Wofford Heights, northeast to an area south of the new cemetery, east to the Kernville Airport, and back south to Camp 9 (see attached maps).

Areas open to cutting include trees found within mapped areas that are not on private or other non-forest system lands. ManTech biologists and environmental technicians will collect willow cuttings between ¾" and 3" in diameter using hand tools (loppers, saws, pruning shears) and power tools (chainsaws). Removal will be dispersed within willow thickets so as not to create "clearcut" patches and no more than 20 percent of biomass will be removed from each willow. No ground disturbance or digging of roots will occur. Careful attention will be made to cut stems in such a way that will prevent hazards to boats, vehicles, livestock or pedestrians. This includes cutting blunt stems, rather than angular, between 1-12" above the soil. All members of the field crew will be trained and experienced in the safe use of all equipment and under direct supervision of a restoration biologist who will ensure that there are no impacts to sensitive resources. After cutting, the willow poles will be transported by a pickup truck and trailer to Edwards Air Force Base for further preparation and planting. Motor vehicles would not be permitted off of highways or NFTS roads and trails.

Purpose of Checklist: For projects categorically excluded under NEPA that do not require a decision memo, this checklist documents that there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Applicable Categorical Exclusions for Projects Not Requiring a Decision Memo	
For full description of each category and examples refer to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.	
32.11 Categories Established by the Secretary 7 CFR 1b.3	32.12 Categories Established by the Chief 36 CFR 220.6(d)
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(1) Policy admin. development/planning	36 CFR 220.6(d)(1) Prohibit for resource protection
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(2) Activities related to funding/money	36 CFR 220.6(d)(2) Admin procedures, processes, instructions
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(3) Inventories, research activities, studies	36 CFR 220.6(d)(3) Repair/maintain Admin. Sites
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(4) Educational and information activities	36 CFR 220.6(d)(4) Repair/maintain roads, trails, landlines
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(5) Law enforcement and investigation	36 CFR 220.6(d)(5) Repair/maintain Rec. Sites/Facilities
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(6) Advisory or consultative activities	36 CFR 220.6(d)(6) Acquisition of land or interest in land.
7 CFR 1b.3(a)(7) Trade representation/market develop	36 CFR 220.6(d)(7) Sale or exchange of land with same land use
	X 36 CFR 220.6(d)(8) Approve/modify/continue less than 1 year Special Use Permit
	36 CFR 220.6(d)(9) New Permit for existing ski area for administrative changes only
	36 CFR 220.6(d)(10) Amend/Replace existing Special Use Permit for administrative changes only
32.3 Categories Established by Statute	
42 USC 15942- Energy Act 2005- Oil and Gas Leases	

16 USC 6554 –HFRA- Applied Silvicultural Assessments				
32.4 Statutory NEPA Exception				
16 USC 6231 – Organization Camp Special Use Authorization				
Determination of Extraordinary Circumstances for the Proposal 36 CFR 220.6(a)				
Resource Conditions 36 CFR 220.6(b)	Resource Condition Present?		For Resource Conditions that are Present, the following Findings are made:	Reference material used to support finding of no extraordinary circumstance
	Yes	No		
(1) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species	X		No federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. While willow flycatchers may be present in the general area, this project avoids designated habitat areas and will cut only in winter when birds are not nesting.	Forest Botanist, Forest Aquatic Ecologist
(2) Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds;	X		Due to the temporary, minor nature of the use, no floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action.	District Hydrologist
(3) Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas;	X		The activities authorized by this project are near the Upper Kern River, designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. However the limited scope of work will not affect this designation.	District Recreation Officer.
(4) Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas;		X	IRAs will not be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	No IRAs in project areas. District Planner
(5) Research natural areas;		X	RNAs will not be <u>adversely</u> affected by this action. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	No RNAs in project areas. District Planner.
(6) American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites, and		X	Implementation of the Proposed Action would not <u>adversely</u> affect American Indian religious or cultural sites. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.	District Archeologist
(7) Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.	X		No archeological sites or sites eligible for National Historic Register listing will be <u>adversely</u> affected by this proposal. No ground disturbance is anticipated and cutting will be limited in scope to prevent clearcuts.	District Archeologist

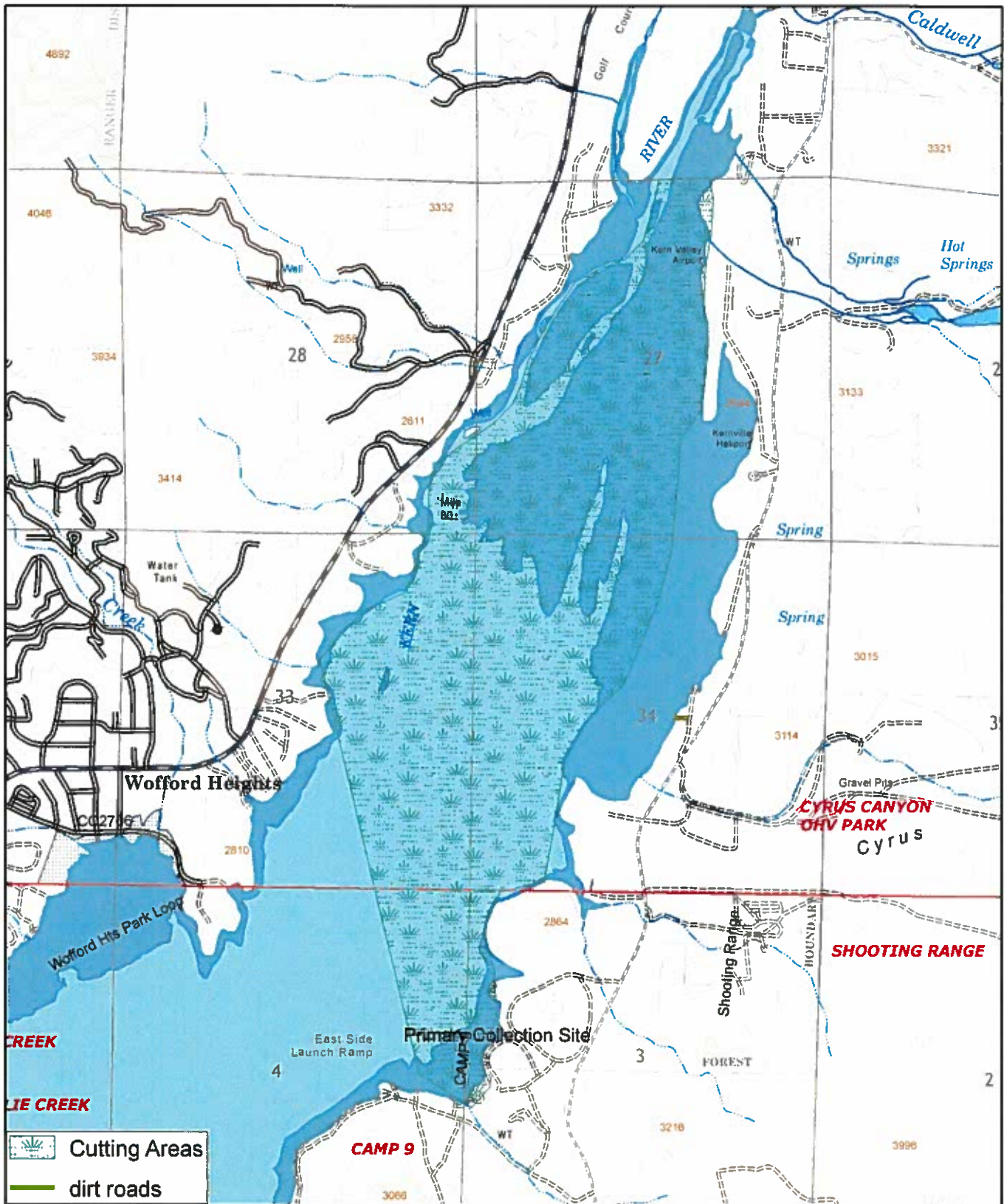
I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this project as described in 36 CFR 220.6 (b). This is not a project or activity implementing a land and resource management plan that is documented in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision.

Signature  _____
PHIL DESENZE
 Acting District Ranger

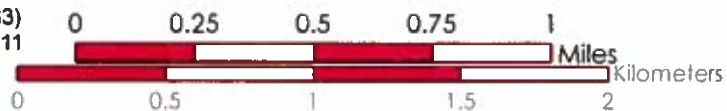
Date 11/17/17

ManTech Willow Cutting 2017 & 2018

Sale Area Map: Map A



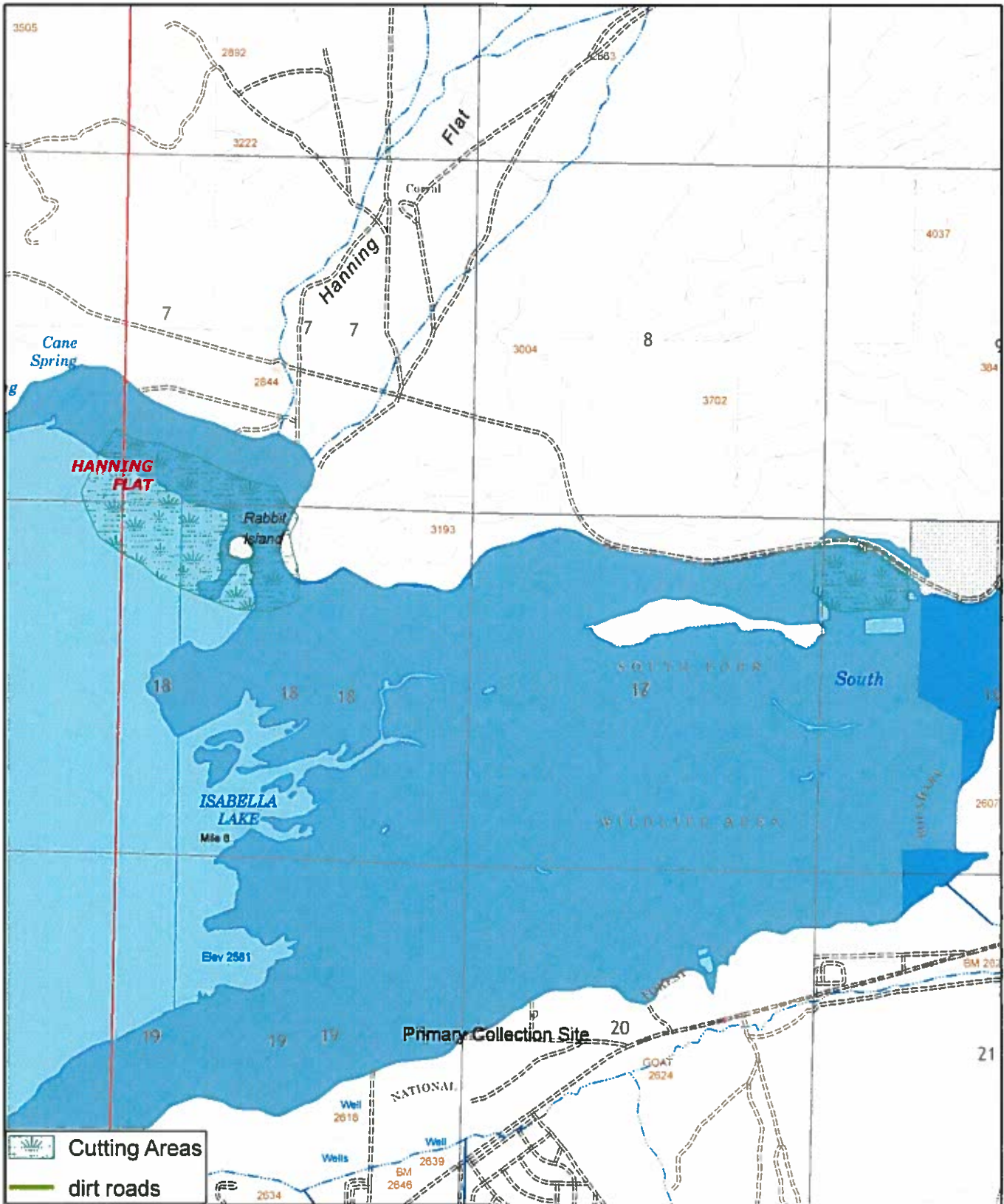
North American Datum 1983 (NAD83)
Universal Transvers Mercator Zone 11
Contour Interval = 40ft
Magnetic Declination = 12.5° E



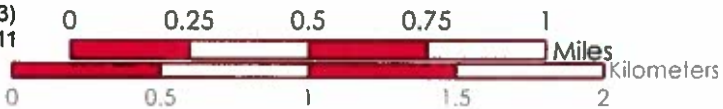
B.A. Block November 17, 2017

ManTech Willow Cutting 2017 & 2018

Sale Area Map: Map B

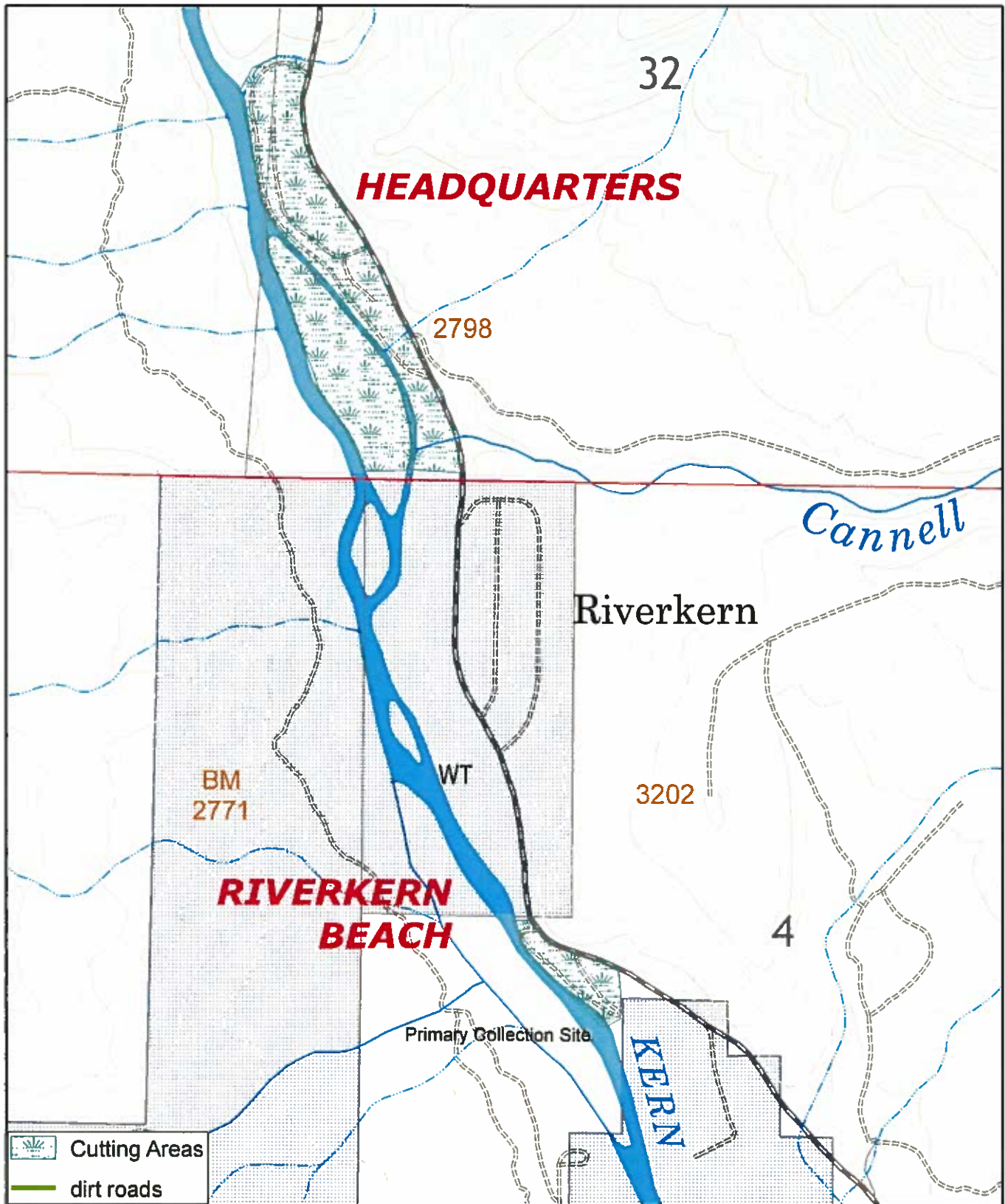


North American Datum 1983 (NAD83)
 Universal Transvers Mercator Zone 11
 Contour Interval = 40ft
 Magnetic Declination = 12.5° E



ManTech Willow Cutting 2017 & 2018

Sale Area Map: Map C



North American Datum 1983 (NAD83)
Universal Transvers Mercator Zone 11
Contour Interval = 40ft
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B.A. Block November 17, 2017