Gulch 16 Timber Harvest Plan (THP) is a 285-acre proposed project of primarily single tree selection (management for a multi-age stand) with two demonstrations utilizing variable retention (retaining structural elements such as wildlife trees and while harvesting the majority of the conifers to regenerate new stand). The project area is located along JDSF Roads 310 and 330 on ‘Three Chop Ridge’ near ‘Indian Springs’ campground, and Gulch 16, a tributary in the Chamberlain Creek watershed. The THP area burned in 2008 (Indian Fire), killing some smaller trees and recruited large amounts of small tanoak seedlings. The goals of this project are to 1) begin moving the even aged stand to an un-even aged stand, increasing age and size diversity, 2) promote redwood regeneration through stump sprouts and planting, 3) maintain and improve forest health and disturbance resiliency (disturbance includes disease, fire, insects, or storm damage), and 4) demonstrate redwood forest rehabilitation over a decade after wildfire.

The proposed project is within the Forest Management Plan’s Matrix (flexible management) and will be utilizing both tractor and cable yarding. Selection, or multi-age management, is proposed on 206 acres, and variable retention in two units of roughly 10 acres each. A shaded fuel break will be created along both sides of JDSF Roads 310 & 330, which are on a major trending ridge.

A forest rehabilitation demonstration is planned for the proposed project. The demonstration will compare the different reforestation results with different overstory densities. A second demonstration on managing hardwoods will also be implemented on the proposed project.

There is Sudden Oak Death (SOD) in the riparian zones below the proposed project. Long term the loss of tanoak to SOD has the potential to reduce wildlife food sources and other ecosystem effects. This plan specifically retains the other native hardwoods, chinkapin and madrone. Long term those species will provide some of the benefits of tanoaks. Though it may seem counter intuitive to kill some tanoak with SOD threatening, two factors should be considered. First, the acorn producing tanoak greater than 20 inches will be retained. Second, there are literally hundreds of tanoak seedlings per acre, providing genetic diversity that could yield more SOD resistant individuals. The treatments will create a window to establish conifers, but tanoak will continue to be a major part of the stand until SOD infections increase. By reducing the number of middle size tanoak now, there will be less resulting standing dead tanoak when the disease progresses in the years to come.

Indian Springs Campground on Road 330 is across from the proposed THP area. Indian Springs is a “Hike In” camp with no on-site water supply and is dilapidated and infrequently used. It will be closed during THP operations, and a 100 foot ‘no cut’ buffer will be established from the campground.