

“DRAFT”

**Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

South River Field Office
EA# OR-105-06-06

Date Prepared: April 30, 2007

Finding of No Significant Impact

The South River Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has completed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management project. Two alternatives are analyzed in detail, consisting of Alternative One, No Action, and Alternative Two, the Proposed Action. One additional alternative was considered but not analyzed in detail (EA, pp. 11-12).

Units proposed for treatment were identified through operational inventories, stand examinations, and field verification by silviculture and wildlife staff. The proposed units are located in: Section 27, T. 28 S., R. 8 W., W.M.; Sections 7 and 19, T. 30 S., R. 7 W., W.M.; and Sections 1, 11, 13, and 23, T. 30 S., R. 8 W., W.M. A description of the “Proposed Action” is located in Chapter 2 of the EA (pp. 4-12).

Unaffected Resources

As addressed in the EA (p. 12), the following Critical Elements of the Human Environment would not be affected because they are absent from the proposed project area: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC); prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; wilderness; waste, solid or hazardous; and Wild and Scenic Rivers. No unique characteristics would be impacted (Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations - 40 CFR § 508.27(b) (3)).

Environmental Justice

The Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management proposal is consistent with Executive Order 12898 which addresses Environmental Justice in minority and low-income populations. As discussed in the EA (p. 12), no potential impacts to low-income or minority populations have been identified by the BLM internally or through the public involvement process. Employment associated with the project would be performed by local contractors engaged in similar types of work throughout Douglas County. Correspondence with local tribal governments did not identify any unique or special resources in the project area which provide religious, employment, subsistence, or recreation opportunities.

Cultural and Historical Resources

As described in the EA (p. 32), a cultural resource inventory was conducted for the Deep Six units but did not identify any prehistoric or historic sites within any of the proposed units. Inventories have not been conducted for the Olly Cat units. The inventory is expected to be completed in the spring of 2007. Any new sites would be avoided or evaluated, whichever would be practical. If new sites are evaluated and deemed significant, the BLM would consult on effects to these new sites. Proposed units and roads would be modified as necessary to avoid adverse effects. If modification is not practical, mitigation would be applied, as provided by the State Historic Preservation Office, in the form of extraction of a portion of the information contained within the resource. Consequently, there would be no adverse impacts to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (40 CFR § 1508.27(b) (8)).

Wildlife

As stated in the EA (p. 19), the Deep Six proposed units are not located within a critical habitat unit designated for the survival and recovery of the **northern spotted owl** (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). The Olly Cat units are within Critical Habitat Unit (CHU) OR-62.

The proposed units are overlapped by four northern spotted owl home ranges (EA, pp. 17 and 42). The proposed density management would modify dispersal-only habitat but spotted owls would be expected to continue to use the stands because canopy cover would exceed 40 percent with mean tree diameters greater than 11 inches, figures widely accepted as a threshold for dispersal function. Also, individual trees considered suitable for nesting would be retained and continue to contribute to the long-term development of NRF for the spotted owl.

No effect to spotted owls from noise disruption would be expected, because, except for Deep Six unit D, there is no occupied or unsurveyed suitable spotted owl habitat within the appropriate disturbance threshold distances of all the remaining proposed density management units. Operations on Deep Six unit D would be subject to seasonal restrictions from March 1 to June 30. Seasonal restrictions could be waived if surveys indicate that spotted owls are not present, not nesting, or failed in nesting. These factors would ensure that noise disruption would not cause spotted owls to abandon nests or fledge prematurely.

As stated in the EA (p. 21), all of the Deep Six units are in Critical Habitat Unit (CHU) OR-06-d, which was designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the survival and recovery of the **marbled murrelet** (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*). None of the Olly Cat units are within a marbled murrelet Critical Habitat Unit.

As described in the EA (p. 21), suitable murrelet habitat occurs in Olly Cat unit P and within 100 yards of Olly Cat units B, C, D, E, and P; and Deep Six unit A. Two years of protocol surveys would be conducted to determine murrelet occupancy.

As stated in the EA (p. 44), density management operations would be subject to Daily Operating Restrictions (DOR) from April 1 to August 5, if murrelets are detected. These daily operating restrictions prohibit the commencement of operations until two hours after sunrise and require cessation of operations two hours before sunset, so that there would be no potential for disturbance to nesting murrelets. The DORs would be waived if murrelets are not detected. The suitable murrelet habitat in Olly Cat unit P would be marked with the help of a wildlife biologist to retain suitable nest trees and maintain habitat functionality. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on availability of suitable murrelet habitat.

The proposed units currently provide marginal **northern goshawk** foraging habitat because of the high tree density and small tree diameters, factors which limit the availability of goshawk prey species and goshawk maneuverability. Density management would improve foraging conditions by reducing tree densities but may reduce suitability for foraging in the short term by decreasing canopy cover. In the longer term, the proposed action could benefit goshawks by accelerating the development of suitable nest trees and improving habitat conditions for goshawk prey species. Consequently, the proposed action would not be expected to contribute to the need to list the goshawk as a threatened or endangered species.

Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), **Pacific pallid bats** (*Antrozous pallidus pacificus*), and **fringed myotis bats** (*Myotis thysanodes*) might also be expected in the project area where they would use large, remnant trees in the forests stands for roosting. As discussed in the EA (p. 45), some roosting opportunities for these bat species could be reduced by density management, but such limited removal would not be expected to result in the extirpation of these bat species, if present, from the project area. Density management would benefit these species by accelerating the development of large trees suitable for roosting. Consequently, the proposed action would not be expected to contribute to the need to list these bat species as threatened or endangered.

Surveys were conducted in units containing suitable habitat for the **Chace Sideband** (*Monadenia chaceana*), **Green Sideband** (*Monadenia fidelis beryllica*), and **Oregon Shoulderband** (*Helminthoglypta hertleini*) snails. Olly Cat units C, M, and P were surveyed to protocol standards and these snail species were not found. The Deep Six units were surveyed in the fall of 2006 with none of these snail species being found. Surveys would be completed in the spring of 2007. If these species are found, they would be protected by altering unit configurations or buffering the site to provide suitable microclimate, undisturbed substrate, and suitable habitat (vegetation or coarse woody debris). These measures would ensure that, if present, viable populations of these species would remain in the project area.

Density management could decrease foraging and nesting opportunities for **hermit warblers** and **Wilson's warblers** with the effects lasting from 10 to 15 years. Density management would also remove some structural complexity that provides habitat for the **winter wren**. However, maintaining "no-harvest" buffers along streams and unthinned areas dispersed throughout the units would provide refugia and continuity of use for these species. Retaining coarse woody debris, creating additional coarse wood, and fostering the development of greater structural diversity and canopy stratification would provide higher quality habitat in the long term.

Fisheries

There are no listed fish species in the project area or on the entire Roseburg District. As described in the EA (p. 31), Essential Fish Habitat is more than 0.8 miles downstream from all proposed units. The only potential effect identified is with respect to sediment, but with implementation of the project design features and best management practices described in the EA (pp. 6-10) the risk for sediment would be localized and the risk of adverse effects to Essential Fish Habitat downstream of the proposed project area would be negligible.

Botany

As described in the EA (p. 31), the proposed units would be surveyed in the spring of 2007 for Special Status Species that might be expected in the project area (see EA, Appendix D). No direct effects to Special Status plant species would be anticipated as a result of the proposed action. In the event that species identified in Appendix D are located during surveys, sites would be protected in accordance with management recommendations designed to maintain habitat conditions favorable for the species persistence.

In the case of fungi, known sites of Bureau Sensitive species would not be affected by the proposed density management because of the spatial distances documented in the EA (pp. 31-32). While it is acknowledged that density management could result in the loss of unknown sites, it would not be expected that this would lead to a need to list any of these under the Endangered Species Act because, as discussed in the EA (p. 56), suitable fungi habitat is expected to remain abundant and well-distributed.

For the reasons described above, there would be no significant adverse impacts to any special status species (40 CFR § 1508.27 (b) (9)). The anticipated impacts would be within the range and scope of those analyzed in the *Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS)*.

The project is consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws (40 CFR § 1508.27(b) (10)).

Implementation of the District *Integrated Weed Management Program*, in association with project design and contract provisions would minimize risk of introduction or spread of noxious weeds in association with road construction and timber harvest. Measures would be implemented to eradicate existing weed infestations. Weed establishment would be discouraged by mulching disturbed areas, seeding with native grasses, or revegetating with indigenous plants. Pressure washing or steam cleaning logging and road construction equipment prior to move-in would remove soil and other substances that could be contaminated with weed seed or other propagative materials to reduce the risk of introducing weeds from outside the project area (EA, p. 32). These actions are consistent with the requirements of the Lacey Act; the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, as amended; and Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species.

Of the ten points listed under 40 CFR § 1508.27(b), the following were considered and were found not to apply to the proposed action: significant beneficial or adverse effects; significant effects on public health or safety; effects on the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial; anticipated cumulatively significant impacts; highly uncertain or unknown risks; and no precedents for future actions with significant effects.

Based on the analysis of potential impacts contained in the environmental assessment, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant impact on the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and that an environmental impact statement is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is within the scope of impacts anticipated in the PRMP/EIS, and is in conformance with the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP) for the Roseburg District, approved by the Oregon/Washington State Director on June 2, 1995.

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Date