

**U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Roseburg BLM District, Oregon**

**Adams Apple
Commercial Thinning & Density Management**

Decision Document

SECTION 1 – THE DECISION

Decision

It is my decision to authorize the Adams Apple portion of the Proposed Action Alternative as described in the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management Environmental Assessment (EA) in Chapters 1 and 2 (EA #OR-104-07-10; pgs. 1, 4-10). The Project Design Features that will be implemented as part of the Action Alternative are described on pages 12-16 of the Elkhead EA. These project design features have been developed into contract stipulations and will be implemented as part of the timber sale contract.

Adams Apple Commercial Thinning & Density Management will occur on one unit (approximately 296 acres) of mid-seral, second-growth forest approximately 47 years old located in the Elk Creek/Umpqua River 5th Field Watershed in Section 19 of T. 23 S., R. 4 W., Willamette Meridian (see Figure 1). Of the 296 acres of treatment, 6 acres will be removed for the development of spur roads and rights-of-ways.

This project is within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA, 190 acres) and Riparian Reserve (106 acres) Land Use Allocations and will provide approximately 5.477 million board feet (5.477 MMBF) of timber available for auction. Approximately 3.519 million board feet (3.519 MMBF) of timber will come from the GFMA and 1.958 million board feet (1.958 MMBF) will come from the Riparian Reserve land use allocations. This project is in conformance with management direction from the ROD/RMP.

This decision is subject to administrative remedy under 43 CFR § 5003.2 and 5003.3.

Updated Information

The updated information, described below, has been considered but does not alter the conclusions of the analysis.

1) Unit Configuration:

Approximately 5 acres have been dropped from Adams Apple since the release of the EA as a result of final mapping and GPS data of Unit 19A. In addition, approximately 32 acres and Spur #3 (as analyzed in the Elkhead EA) in the NW ¼ of Section 19 of T. 23 S., R. 4 W., Willamette Meridian will be deferred due to issues regarding legal access. Within Adams Apple, there will be 164 acres of ground-based yarding (formerly 174 acres as proposed in

the EA [pg. 8]) and 132 acres of cable yarding (formerly 152 acres as proposed in the EA [pg. 8]) in Unit 19A.

The EA (pg. 14) states that for ground-based yarding, harvesters will be limited to slopes less than 45 percent for distances less than 150 feet. This statement is in error and is corrected here to read that harvesters will be limited to distances less than 150 feet on slopes between 35 – 45 percent.

Also, Adams Apple Spur #6 from the EA has been re-numbered as Adams Apple Spur #2 and Adams Apple Spur #7 from the EA has been re-numbered as Adams Apple Spur #3. There will be approximately 1.7 miles of temporary spur roads constructed; formerly 2.04 miles were proposed in the EA.

Compliance and Monitoring

Compliance with this decision will be ensured by frequent on the ground inspections by the Contracting Officer's Representative. Monitoring will be conducted as per the direction given in Appendix I of the RMP (pgs. 189-209).

SECTION 2 – THE DECISION RATIONALE

The Project Design Features described in the EA (pgs. 12-16) will minimize soil compaction, limit erosion, protect slope stability, protect wildlife habitat, protect fish habitat, protect air and water quality, as well as protect other identified resource values. I have reviewed the resource information contained in the EA and the updated information presented in this decision. This decision recognizes that impacts could occur to some of these resources; however, the impacts to resource values will not exceed those identified in the *Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS). This decision provides timber commodities resulting from silvicultural treatments whose effects to the environment are within those anticipated and already analyzed in the PRMP/EIS.

Chapter 2 of the EA describes two alternatives: a "No Action" alternative and a "Proposed Action" alternative. The No Action alternative was not selected because it did not meet the objectives from pages 1-2 of the EA to:

- comply with Section I of the O&C Act,
- contribute timber volume towards a sustainable supply of timber,
- contribute to the Roseburg District's annual allowable sale quantity of 45 MMBF,
- manage GFMA to assure a high level of sustained timber productivity, or
- perform density management within the Riparian Reserve to help forest stands develop late-successional characteristics and attain forest conditions that contribute to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

SECTION 3 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The BLM solicited comments from affected tribal governments, adjacent landowners, affected State and local government agencies, and the general public on the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management EA, which included the Adams Apple project, during a 30-day

public comment period (March 18 – April 17, 2008). Two comments were received as a result of the public comment period.

Upon reviewing the comments, the following topics warrant additional clarification specific to the Adams Apple project: (1) roads, (2) ground-based yarding on slopes, and (3) herbicides.

1) Roads

A comment questioned the need for the amount of spur roads as proposed in the EA and the perceived lack of decommissioning of existing roads, particularly on the 23-4-19.1 road in Adams Apple.

The interdisciplinary team developed a proposed harvest plan using the existing road network to the greatest degree practical while still meeting the stated objectives and decision factors (EA, pgs. 2-3). Spur road impacts were minimized to the extent practicable while maintaining the ability to successfully implement the silvicultural prescription in a cost efficient manner while providing for the protection of soil and water quality, and meeting other land use objectives.

As stated in the EA (pg. 9), the 23-4-19.0, 23-4-19.1, and 23-4-19.2 roads (3.25 miles) will be renovated to enable access for thinning operations in Adams Apple and then decommissioned afterwards. These roads, including the 23-4-19.1 road, will be decommissioned by removing cross-drains/culverts, water-barring, mulching with logging slash where available (or with straw if logging slash is not available), and blocking with trench barriers.

2) Ground-based Yarding on Slopes

A comment stated “[g]round-based operations are being allowed on slopes up to 60% steep for 150-feet in length. The EA failed to describe how many of these 150’, 60% stretches would be allowed...”

On page 30 of the Elkhead EA, the EA states that “[t]here are short slope pitches of 35 to 60 percent up to 150 feet in length where ground-based operations are designated.” Approximately 1 percent (2 acres) of the designated ground-based harvest area have slopes up to 60 percent, but ground-based equipment will not actually travel across the steeper slopes (i.e. 45 – 60 percent slope). The PDFs (EA, pg. 14) limit skid and forwarder trails to slopes less than 35 percent.

The EA (pg. 14) states that harvesters will be limited to slopes less than 45 percent for distances less than 150 feet. This statement is in error and is corrected here to read that harvesters will be limited to distances less than 150 feet on slopes between 35 – 45 percent.

Trees in the designated ground-based yarding areas with slopes between 45 – 60 percent will be yarded by equipment operating on gentler ground (i.e. less than 45 percent) and “reaching in”. Trees in these areas can be reached by a 20 foot harvester boom reaching up or down the slope as the harvester itself remains on less than 35 percent slopes. Where harvester-forwarder or skidder operations are used, there is the option of hand-falling the tree to lead where the harvester boom reaches for the tree bole or a line is pulled to the tree bole from a skidder. By hand-falling to lead, harvester-forwarders or

skidders will avoid operating on slopes greater than 45 percent and will generally not operate on slopes greater than 35 percent.

3) Herbicides

A comment was received regarding the use of herbicides to control noxious weeds 0.5 mile upstream from one of the intakes for the municipal drinking water system for the city of Yoncalla.

All herbicide use will comply with US Department of the Interior rules and policy, BLM policy and guidelines, Oregon State laws and regulations, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) laws and regulations, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), federal pesticide laws (FIRCA), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations, local county weed district priorities and requirements, as well as product label requirements, and in strict accordance with the guidelines established in the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Impact Statement* (ROD 1986).

As stated in the EA (pg. 46), noxious weeds would be treated under the Roseburg District's Noxious Weed Program. With respect to spraying herbicide to control noxious weeds near streams, the following requirements will prevent water contamination as part of the Roseburg District Noxious Weed Program which was developed from the aforementioned policies and regulations:

- No refueling of equipment, staging, mixing and loading of herbicides within 100 feet of surface water.
- No vehicle mounted boom sprayers or vehicle mounted handguns will be used within 60 feet of surface (live) water. (2004 Washington Toxics Coalition vs. EPA court ruling re: herbicide restriction on streams bearing listed salmonid species). All buffer strips will be delineated on the ground by means of flagging or other similarly effective physical delineation.
- No vehicle mounted booms will be used in riparian/wetland/pond areas where weeds are closely intermingled with trees and shrubs.
- In riparian/wetland/pond areas no spray equipment will be used when wind speeds exceed 5 mph. No aerial applications are allowed in riparian/wetland /ponds.
- Hand application of general use herbicides by backpack sprayer, hand sprayers, or wick wipers may occur up to 15 feet from surface water, but only for spot treatment of noxious weeds that do not exceed heights of 2.5 feet.

The remaining comments did not raise substantive issues that would influence my selection of the Action Alternative for the Adams Apple portion of the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management EA.

SECTION 4 – PROTEST PROCEDURES

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR § 5003

Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer [Marci L. Todd] within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states that: “Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.” This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail or facsimile protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Roseburg District Office will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

Protests received more than 15 days after the first publication of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement are not timely filed and shall not be considered. Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to her. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of her review, serve her decision in writing to the protesting party. Upon denial of a protest the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision.

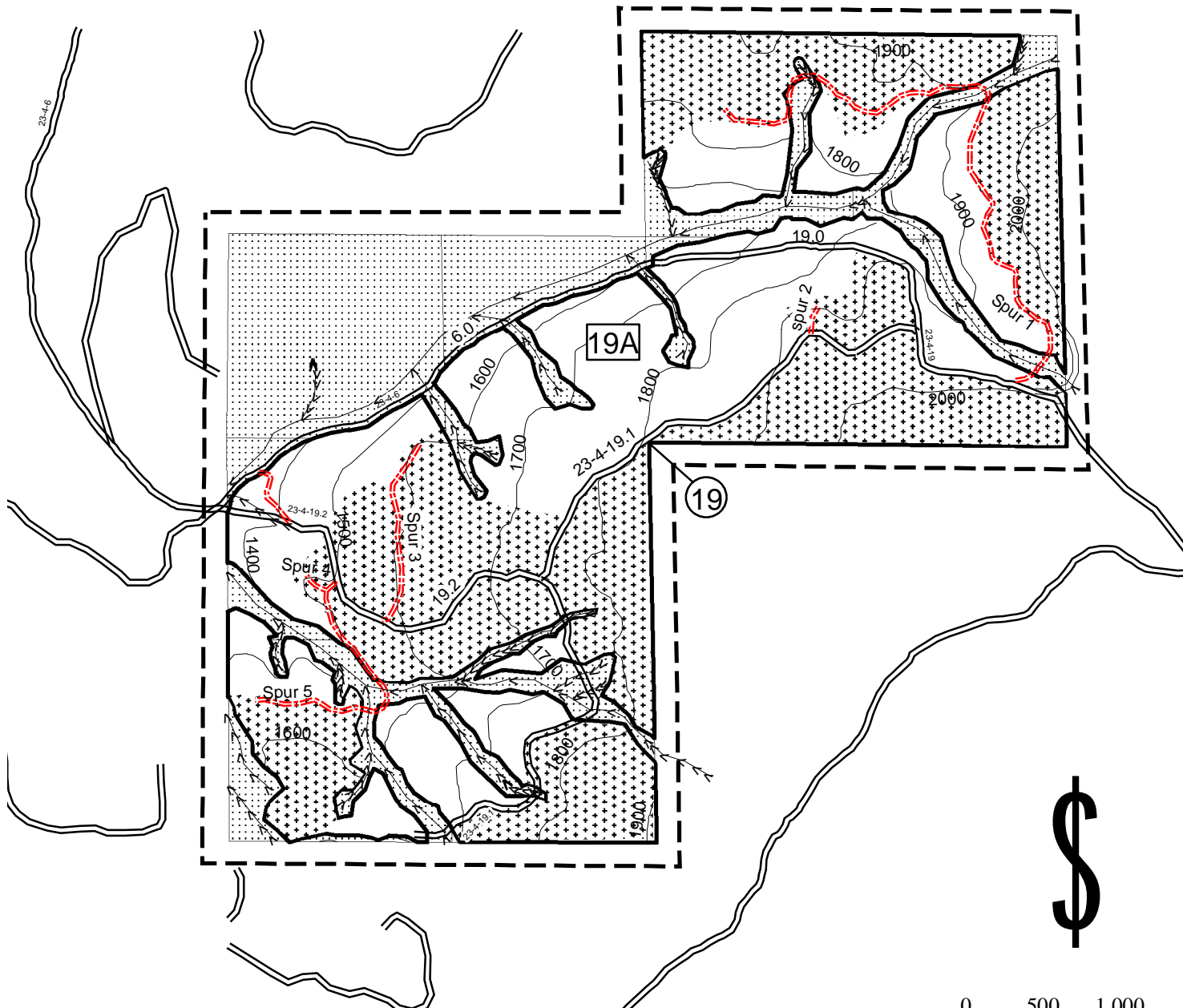
For further information, contact Marci L. Todd, Field Manager, Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd; Roseburg, OR. 97470, (541) 440-4931.

Marci L. Todd, Field Manager
Swiftwater Field Office




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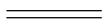




Figure 1. Adams Apple Commercial Thinning & Density Management.

District	Township	Range	Section	Meridian
ROSEBURG	23S	4W	19	WILLAMETTE



LEGEND

-  Harvest Area - Cable Yarding
-  Harvest Area - Ground Based
-  Reserve Area

-  Existing Road
-  Roads to be Constructed
-  Boundary of Cutting Area
-  Boundary of Contract Area
-  Stream

