



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Pacific  
Northwest  
Region



# **Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Improvements FY 2007 Project**

**Umpqua National Forest  
Diamond Lake Ranger District**

April 2008







## ***Introduction and Project Location***

The Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project contains several different wildlife management techniques located across the Diamond Lake District. Project activities include winter range mowing, food plot creation, soil restoration and forage enhancement, and meadow restoration. These treatments are located in the Thorn Prairie, Mowich Park, Maple Creek, and Tool Box Meadows areas of the District.

These activities occur in T25S R04E Sections 35 &36, T26S R04E Section 13, T26S R05E Sections 30-35, T27S R04E Sections 1-4 & 9.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED, PROPOSED ACTION**

The purpose of the project is to provide wildlife populations and habitat conditions for the public benefit, as envisioned in the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan (Forest Plan). Active wildlife habitat management activities, including those included within this project, are needed to provide the wildlife resource results and outputs as envisioned in the Forest Plan.

In summary, the various projects include:

Winter Range Mowing: 8 units totaling 313 acres  
Food Plot Creation: 20 units totaling 70 acres  
Soil Restoration and Forage Enhancement: 26 acres  
Meadow Restoration: 1 unit totaling 20 acres

## ***Decision and Rationale***

It is my decision to implement the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project, with provisions that:

1. Food plot unit 7 will be revised to meet resource protection recommendations;
2. The larger overstory trees in food plot units 1 and 2 will be retained.
3. Resource protections recommended by specialists for the meadow restoration activities will be followed (i.e. sapling removal will use hand tools, slash will be hand piled and burned without fireline creation, and vehicles will be restricted from traveling off road during implementation).
4. Activity fuels will be treated as recommended by resource specialists.
5. Invasive plant control practices will be implemented.

I have made this decision to implement the project since it implements priority restoration activities identified in the Forest's Terrestrial Business Plan, contributes to resource outputs as anticipated in the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), and enhances local wildlife habitat and populations. The project provides these public benefits while complying with management standards within the Forest Plan (as amended).

This decision covers the majority of proposed activities included in the proposed action. The remaining 348 acres of mowing, 42 acres of food plots, and 45 acres of soil restoration which are omitted from this decision may be included in future, subsequent decisions as outstanding resource analysis are completed.

## ***Findings as Required by Law, Policy and Regulation***

### ***Finding of Consistency with Applicable Forest Service Management Direction and the National Forest Management Act***

Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis for this project, I find that the project is consistent with the standards, guidelines, and amendments of the Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan and is therefore consistent with the National Forest Management Act. This finding includes all of the following determinations documented in the specialists' reports for this project:

This project, as revised, will not prevent attainment of the goals and objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

This project is consistent with the 1990 Umpqua National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan.

All project areas are either currently non-forested or recently regenerated forest stands. As such, the project meets at least one of the exceptions listed in the modified October 11, 2006 injunction as a result of *Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al v. Mark Rey et al, Civ. No. 04-844, Western District of Washington*.

Therefore, I find that the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project is consistent with all applicable Forest Service management direction.

### ***Finding of Consistency with State Historic Preservation Office Policies***

Based on my review of the heritage resource information, I find that the project is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act and that no heritage resources would be affected by this project.

### ***Finding of Non-Jeopardy to Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive Species and No Adverse Effect to Species Covered Under the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act***

The analysis team's fisheries biologist has determined that this project would have no effect on any threatened species or their critical habitat, no effect on Essential Fish Habitat, and no impact on any sensitive species. This project complies with the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The project includes locations that are within 60 meters of suitable spotted owl habitat, and have the potential to create noise disturbance that could disturb resident owls. Implementation of these activities during the spotted owl reproductive season is "likely to adversely affect" individual spotted owls if the nearby habitat is occupied. These impacts are consistent with disturbance related consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and do not reach the level of impact where species jeopardy is a concern. The Wildlife Biologist also determined that the project would have no effect to designated recovery habitat for the spotted owl. The project is also consistent with Forest Plan direction and objectives for rare and unusual species, terrestrial Management Indicator Species, and Forest Service Sensitive species. Therefore, I find that the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project will not likely adversely affect resident reproduction or recovery objectives and does not jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened wildlife species.

The analysis team's botanist has determined that this project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat, no impact on regionally sensitive plant species and no impact on rare and unusual plant species.

### ***Finding of the Absence of Adverse Effects to Extraordinary Circumstances***

Scoping to determine the presence or absence of potential effects on extraordinary circumstances began in the October 2006 Umpqua National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions. No public comments have been received. Based on my review of the interdisciplinary analysis, I find that this project does not adversely affect any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 1909.15, 30.3(2). Specifically, I find that this project will be implemented in a manner that does not adversely affect: (a) endangered or threatened species viability or their critical habitats, or any Forest Service sensitive species viability; (b) floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds; (c) Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness or National Recreation Areas; (d) inventoried roadless areas; (e) Research Natural Areas; (f) Native American religious or cultural sites, or archaeological or historic properties and sites.

### ***Finding of Consistency with All Applicable Federal Laws and Regulations***

Based on my review of the actions associated with this project and all applicable specialists' reports, I find that the project is consistent with the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Forest Management Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. Therefore, I find that the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project is consistent with applicable Federal laws and regulations.

### ***Finding of Exclusion from Further National Environmental Policy Act Analysis***

Based on my review of (1) the actions associated with this project; (2) the environmental consequences documented in the interdisciplinary analysis; (3) the consistency of this project with applicable laws, regulations, and management direction; (4) the non-jeopardy to endangered or threatened species or heritage resources; and (5) the absence of adverse effects to extraordinary circumstances; I find that this project is not significant in either context or intensity (40 CFR 1508.27) and that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with these projects (FSH 1909.15). I also find that this project will produce no adverse environmental effects, individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or social components of the human environment. Therefore, I find that the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement FY07 Project is categorically excluded from analysis in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement (40 CFR 1508.4 and FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3, Part 1) and that the category of exclusion is Category 31.2 (6) as identified in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30.

### ***Appeals***

No comments were received during the 30-day notice and comment period, which ran from March 2, 2008 to April 2, 2008. Therefore, this decision is not subject to administrative review (appeal) in accordance with 36 CFR 215.12(e)(1).

### ***Contact Person***

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Jeff Bohler; phone number 541-498-2531; email address [jbohler@fs.fed.us](mailto:jbohler@fs.fed.us).

**Signature and Date**

/s/ John Ouimet

**District Ranger**

April 8, 2008

**Date Signed**

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**Date Published**