United States
Department of
Agriculture

**Forest
Service**

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Decision Notice

Lobster Landscape Management Project

Central Coast Ranger District-ODNRA
Siuslaw National Forest
Benton, Lane, and Lincoln Counties, Oregon

Lead Agency: **USDA Forest Service**

Responsible Official: **William Helphinstine, District Ranger**
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Project Background, Area, and Needs

The Lobster Landscape Mangement Project (the Project) includes actions designed to accelerate the development of late-successional forest habitat and enhance water quality and stream function on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

The Project's planning area includes about 18,600 acres of the Lobster 5th-field watershed near Alsea, Oregon. The project area is located in portions of Township 14 South, Range 9 West; and Township 15 South, Ranges 8 and 9 West; Benton, Lane, and Lincoln Counties, Oregon. The Project is about 32 air miles southwest of Corvallis, Oregon.

The needs requiring actions in the Project area were identified in chapter 1 of the Project environmental assessment (EA):

> The need to speed the development of late-successional habitat in late-successional and riparian reserves.
>
> The need to maintain existing meadow habitats and restore some grass, forb, and shrub habitats.
>
> The need to improve watershed function.
>
> The need to use timber-sale revenue to repair and maintain key forest roads to standards that allow commercial and noncommercial use.
>
> The need to produce timber from plantations in matrix lands in a manner that provides important ecological functions.

The decision to be made is whether to implement actions designed to meet the Project needs by selecting one of the action alternatives (Alternative 2 or Alternative 3) or to postpone these actions by selecting the no-action alternative (Alternative 1).

My Decision

I have decided to implement all the activities described under Alternative 2 (proposed action) of the Project EA. In making this decision, I have reviewed the Project EA, its appendices, and other project-file documents, including the associated biological opinions, correspondence with NOAA-Fisheries, and the comments received during the 30-day public comment period.

The following activities under Alternative 2 will be done to speed the development of late-successional habitat in late-successional and riparian reserves; maintain and create grass, forb, and shrub habitats; improve watershed function; repair and maintain key forest roads; and produce timber and meet late-successional objectives on matrix land:

Plantation treatments and associated actions

- Commercially thin about 3,003 acres of plantations, including about 2,459 acres by skyline logging and 544 acres by helicopter. About 2,778 acres are in late-successional reserve, with about 2,195 acres also in riparian reserve; about 225 acres are in matrix; (EA, map 2 and appendix B-3);
- Temporarily reopen about 7.77 miles of existing roads for commercial thinning operations. About 6.9 miles are in late-successional reserve, with about 4.8 miles also in riparian reserve; about 0.87 mile is in matrix (EA, map 2 and appendix B-3);
- Build about 1.45 miles of temporary road on stable ridges for commercial thinning operations. About 1.35 miles are in late-successional reserve, with about 0.1 mile also in riparian reserve; about 0.1 mile in matrix (EA, map 2 and appendix B-3);
- Create cavities in about 300 large trees (28 to 36 inches in diameter) in natural stands adjacent to commercially thinned plantations, as mitigation for trees with cavities and for snags that were cut inside plantation boundaries during initial harvest;
- Develop future snags in portions of plantations that will be commercially thinned by topping or girdling about 17,800 trees. These will serve to mitigate snags that were cut inside plantation boundaries during initial harvest and trees removed with this project that otherwise would develop into snags (EA, appendix B-2);
- Increase the down wood component in commercially thinned plantations by leaving about 14,900 trees on the ground to mitigate loss associated with past harvest practices and trees removed with this project that would otherwise develop into down wood (EA, appendix B-2);
- Increase grass, forb, and shrub habitats in commercially thinned plantations by under-burning about 775 acres and seeding about 1,000 acres;
- Maintain about 54 acres of meadow habitat to provide habitat for dependent species;
- Non-commercially thin about 212 acres of plantations. All acres are in late-successional reserve, with about 160 acres also in riparian reserve (EA, map 2);
- Plant a mixture of shade-tolerant conifers and hardwoods in about 736 acres of existing plantations;
- Remove about 240 cubic yards of culvert fill and unstable sidecast material from temporary roads; and
- Plant shade-tolerant conifers on about 5 acres adjacent to Preacher Creek to improve future stream shading and provide future sources of large wood for the stream.

Key and non-key forest road actions

- Decommission about 5 miles of non-key (system) roads. All miles are in late-successional reserve, with about 3.9 miles also in riparian reserve (EA, map 2);
- Remove about 11,870 cubic yards of fill material from system roads, and about 2,400 cubic yards from one abandoned road near Bear Creek;

- Close about 46.6 miles of non-key roads. About 43.1 miles are in late-successional reserve, with about 13,7 miles also in riparian reserve; about 3.5 miles are in matrix; (EA, map 2);
- Repair and maintain key forest roads 3225, 3305, 3500, 3505, and 3515, totaling about 26.3 miles—17.6 miles inside and 8.7 miles outside the Project area; (EA, map 2);
- Use thinning and salvage operations to manage roadside vegetation adjacent to key forest roads, affecting about 225 acres.

Plantation treatments in matrix

- Commercially thin about 225 acres and provide about 2.6 million board feet of timber.

Most activities would be completed in 10 years, with commercial timber-sale contracts awarded in 5 to 6 years, beginning as early as FY 2007.

Project design criteria, including mitigation and monitoring requirements (EA, appendix A), will be incorporated to ensure protection of natural resources.

Reasons for the Decision

My decision was based on several factors. Alternative 2 was selected because it best meets the late-successional habitat need, it best meets the need to restore watershed health in the long term, it meets the need to repair and maintain key forest roads, and it meets the need to produce timber and manage stands in the matrix land allocation—these needs are described in chapter 1 of the Project EA.

Project actions under Alternative 2 are designed to protect affected resources in the short term and maintain or enhance the quality and productivity of these resources in the long term.

The Project needs

To speed the development of late-successional habitat in late-successional and riparian reserves:

The Northwest Forest Plan allocated most of the Siuslaw National Forest to late-successional and riparian reserves. Forests on the coast have very high growth rates. The Siuslaw has great potential for successfully creating late-successional habitat, with old-growth characteristics, at a landscape level. Most of the Siuslaw has been heavily harvested in the past and plantations are densely stocked with Douglas fir. Research has clearly shown that the current landscape of densely stocked, uniform plantations of Douglas fir is much different than the complex and diverse old-growth forests.

Based on past and ongoing studies, thinning similarly aged plantations speeds the growth of the remaining trees and allows them to develop both horizontally and vertically. Variable thinning (thinning at different levels in different areas); snag and down wood creation; gap creation, under-burning and seeding; and underplanting (using various native tree species) also increases habitat diversity and complexity in stands. Leaving some felled trees on the ground adds to the richness on the forest floor, creating habitat as well as supplying critical

nutrients. Creating cavities and snags provides a multitude of forage, nesting, and roosting opportunities. I believe these actions, as described in Alternative 2, are necessary to accelerate the development of healthy late-successional forest habitat. Alternative 2 is designed to maximize benefits and minimize adverse effects to wildlife, which is a primary Forest Service objective.

The effects of building new temporary roads are basically limited to localized soil compaction and displacement because they will be located on stable ground and will not cross streams. No increase in soil compaction is expected from temporarily reopening and using existing roads. Past and project-related soil compaction and displacement is expected to be well under the Siuslaw Forest Plan threshold of 15 percent in affected plantations.

To maintain existing meadow habitats and restore some grass, forb, and shrub habitats:

The habitat component for species dependent on grass, forb, and shrub habitats is low and declining in the Project planning area (EA, chapter 1). Maintaining meadows and creating some grass, forb, and shrub habitats in plantations will benefit dependent species in the planning area.

To improve watershed function:

The Project planning area has several miles of perennial and intermittent streams—some provide important fish habitat, some supply water for domestic use, and some streams do both. Water quality and quantity are directly tied to watershed health. Mid-slope roads block fish passage between tributaries and main-stem streams, and interfere with natural landslides that move upslope trees and debris into streams. Alternative 2 will improve fish habitat and water quality by removing culverts and associated fill material, and unstable sidecast fill material from some mid-slope roads. These actions will restore natural hydrologic processes and reduce the risk of human-caused landslides.

Other actions in Alternative 2 that are designed to ameliorate unnatural conditions in the watershed include replacing some culverts with larger ones to improve fish passage and reduce barriers to natural processes, reducing chronic sedimentation of streams from roads, reducing the potential for pulses of sediment to enter streams from roads, and maintaining stream shade.

To use timber-sale revenue to repair and maintain key forest roads to standards that allows commercial and noncommercial use:

Five key forest roads in or near the project planning area have not been maintained to standards for several years because funds for road maintenance on the Forest have been lacking. To keep these roads suitable for commercial and noncommercial use, reduce potential adverse effects on soil and water resources, and to protect the capitol investment in these roads, timber-sale revenue would be needed to make the repairs on these roads. I

recognize repairing and maintaining these roads may reduce the ability to fund enhancement actions, such as planting trees in plantations and creating grass, forb, and shrub habitats. However, there are many variables that influence the value of timber at the time of sale, including market conditions, competition during bids for timber sales, the type of timber-sale contract used (e.g., stewardship contract), and flexibility in the season of operations—any of which can affect the sale's ability to fund the enhancement actions. Bid values from our most recent sales indicate funding all enhancement actions under this decision appears likely. In the event funding falls short of implementing all enhancement actions, other funding sources may be available to help accomplish all these actions, which is my goal.

The need to produce timber from plantations in matrix lands in a manner that provides important ecological functions:

Alternative 2 produces about 2,600 thousand board feet of timber from plantations in matrix lands, while providing important ecological functions, such as down wood, snag, and early seral habitats.

Alternative 2 also best meets my expectations for holistic and integrated restoration. No unacceptable cumulative effects to any resource are expected. Many beneficial effects will accrue from implementing the Project, and the risk associated with any potential negative effects, discussed in chapter 3 of the Project EA, is low.

In my review of the Project EA, its appendices, and other project-file documents, I believe the information provided to me is adequate for a reasoned choice of action. I am fully aware that the selected alternative will have some unavoidable adverse environmental effects such as disturbance to wildlife (EA, page 94), irreversible resource commitments such as continued use of existing roads (EA, page 94), and irretrievable commitment of resources such as loss of vehicular access through the forest as roads are closed or decommissioned (EA, page 95). I have determined, however, that these risks will be outweighed by the likely benefits.

In making this selection, I have also reviewed information in the administrative record, including but not limited to the Siuslaw Forest Plan (1990), as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (1994); the Lobster-Five Rivers Watershed Analysis (1997); the Late-Successional Reserve Assessment, Oregon Coast Province Southern Portion (1997); consultation files and records involving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries); public and other agency comments; and applicable laws and regulations.

Alternatives Considered

Before selecting Alternative 2, I considered Alternative 1 (no action), Alternative 3, and other alternatives that were eliminated from detailed study in the Project EA.

Alternative 1, no action—Alternative 1 is fully described in chapter 2 of the Project EA, page 12. The analysis of the effects of Alternative 1 is disclosed in chapter 3 of the Project EA. The no-action alternative forms the basis for a comparison between meeting the project needs and not meeting the project needs. This alternative provides baseline information for understanding changes associated with Alternatives 2 and 3 and expected environmental responses as a result of past management actions.

Alternative 3, build no temporary roads and do not temporarily reopen roads—Alternative 3 is fully described in chapter 2 of the Project EA, pages 14 and 15. The analysis of the effects of Alternative 3 is disclosed in chapter 3 of the Project EA. This alternative would not build temporary roads or temporarily reopen existing roads. Alternative 3 was developed in response to public comments on this project and on past, similar projects, such as the Yachats Terrestrial Restoration Project. One commenter preferred that we fully evaluate another action alternative that would not build new temporary roads or reopen existing closed roads.

Reasons for Not Selecting the Other Alternatives

Alternative 1—The no-action alternative does not create obvious negative effects, but it also does not meet any of the Project needs. And, without some restorative actions, some watershed conditions—including water quality and fish habitat—would continue to degrade (EA, pages 2 to 7).

Alternative 3—By not building new temporary roads or not temporarily reopening roads, Alternative 3 would require more helicopter yarding than Alternative 2, reducing the amount of timber revenue that could be used to implement enhancement actions. In addition, without use of these roads, about 199 acres would be non-commercially thinned, forgoing timber revenue from these acres and raising the cost of the project. These additional costs would reduce the amount of funding available for enhancement actions (EA, page 37).

In comparing Alternative 3 with Alternative 2, I felt that the minor soil and water impacts associated with building new temporary roads and temporarily reopening roads under Alternative 2 did not warrant the selection of Alternative 3, with its lesser sale value. Therefore, Alternative 3 was not selected.

Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study

I considered several alternatives, based largely on public scoping comments. The following alternatives represent those that I considered, but for various reasons, were eliminated from detailed study.

Essential fish habitat extended buffers

Through the Magnuson Stevens Act, NOAA-Fisheries has the regulatory responsibility to conserve and enhance essential fish habitat associated with coho and chinook salmon in the planning area. They have no statutory requirements or obligation to protect and restore the ecosystems and habitats of other aquatic or terrestrial species associated with the planning area. NOAA-Fisheries reviewed the proposed actions and concluded they are not aware of any opportunities for commercial thinning to improve the recruitment of in-stream wood into essential fish habitat. They proposed recommendations to avoid,

minimize or offset potential adverse affects to essential fish habitat in the watershed from commercial thinning on Federal Lands. To implement these measures, 64 units would have a no cut buffer within 100 feet of streams or channels, and a light thin prescription (200 trees per acre) between 100 feet and 250 feet (site potential tree height) from streams or channels. Seven units would have a no cut buffer of 145 feet from streams and channels, and a light thin prescription (200 trees per acre) between 145 feet and 250 feet from the streams and channels. Nine units would be thinned as proposed.

Implementation of this alternative would place over 70 percent of the potential acres proposed for commercial thinning in the extended buffer prescriptions. In a study on 10 sites in the Oregon Coast Range, Tappeiner et al. (1997) found that mature trees in old-growth stands experienced minimal inter-tree competition over their lifetime because of low initial stocking of trees per acre. The plantations in the Lobster watershed were planted initially with 400 to 600 trees per acre, and currently average 180 to 200 trees per acre, as a result of earlier non-commercial thinning treatment. Plantations that were not non-commercially thinned average 330 trees per acre. Given Tappeiner's study and the inventory results from chapter V, Table 9 of the Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (USDA 1997; version 1.3), thinning stands to 40 to 75 trees per acre would allow the remaining trees to develop on a trajectory more consistent with natural stand development, known to produce large old-growth trees.

The proposed NOAA-Fisheries buffer prescriptions would result in no change in the vegetative composition of the plantations, and no increase in the growth of the residual trees. The District Ranger concluded that eliminating 70 percent of the project area from treatment would not meet the need to speed the development of late successional habitat in late successional and riparian reserves, a primary purpose for the Project. The Forest Supervisor concluded that the proposed NOAA-Fisheries buffer prescriptions were not required to avoid, minimize or offset potential adverse affects to essential fish habitat (USDA 2006b). Thus, this alternative was not fully developed.

Single entry treatment of all managed stands

Considerable thought was given to determine whether a one-time only thinning entry is desirable for all 25 to 50 year-old stands. The planning team and I felt strongly that this alternative provided too much risk to stands. With this alternative, managed stands across the landscape would be thinned to about 30 to 50 trees per acre and include associated actions, such as creating snags and planting trees in the understory. Following treatment, these stands would be allowed to develop old-growth conditions on their own. A landscape populated by stands with minimum numbers of trees leaves little room for mortality from natural events, such as strong winds or insect infestation. In addition, the variability between stands would be limited.

Tappeiner et al. (1997) and Oliver and Larson (1996) advocate the use of several prescriptive residual overstory levels across the landscape. Carey et al. (1999) says that diversity in treatment is critical to meeting existing and future needs of wildlife. Variability and diversity are the keys to recapturing many of the forest functions. Also, the Northwest Forest Plan standards and guidelines incorporate the concept of

adaptive management (ROD, page E-12). Applying the single-entry treatment on all plantations limits the agency's ability to monitor, evaluate, and adapt treatments to these plantations in response to new information. Thus, under this alternative, the Forest Service would not be able to apply the concept of adaptive management in the Lobster 5th-field watershed.

Because of the current level of uncertainty with single-entry treatment, I decided it was better to take a more conservative approach to stand management and development at this time by implementing single-entry prescriptions for only a few stands under this project. As information is obtained about single-entry treatments, such as through the Five Rivers Landscape Management Project Final EIS study, it may become a more widespread silvicultural tool in the future.

Help from the Public and Other Agencies

After considering the identified problems to be addressed with this project and developing a proposal to correct the problems, letters describing the actions considered in the proposed Lobster Landscape Management Project were mailed to about 200 individuals, agencies, and organizations identified as potentially interested in the proposed project and analysis. Public comment on the proposed project was solicited through the Siuslaw National Forest's quarterly "Project Update" publications. A news release about the project, dated January 20, 2005, was sent to the Register-Guard in Eugene, Oregon; the Gazette-Times in Corvallis, Oregon; the News-Times in Newport, Oregon; and the Siuslaw News in Florence, Oregon. Scoping letters were mailed on January 20, 2005. Comments were requested by February 21, 2005. Eleven (11) persons or organizations responded to these scoping efforts.

Public comments contained a variety of suggestions to consider. Comments not outside the scope of the project and not covered by previous environmental review or existing regulations were reviewed for substantive content related to the project. Based largely on public comment, some alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed study, while another was considered in detail. The alternatives are discussed in chapter 2. Comments, relevant to clarifying how the project will be implemented or disclosing the effects of implementing the project, are addressed in chapters 2, 3, or 4; the project design criteria (appendix A); or the project file

The notice of availability for Lobster Landscape Management Project Preliminary Analysis was published in the Eugene Register-Guard on May 10, 2006, informing the public that the preliminary analysis is available for a 30-day review and comment period. Copies of the preliminary analysis, along with cover letters announcing that the preliminary analysis is available for a 30-day public comment period, were mailed to those who commented on the proposed project or who requested a copy of the document. The legal notice and letters indicated the beginning and end of the comment period, described the comment process, and identified a Forest Service contact person. Copies of the preliminary analysis were also made available at the Siuslaw National Forest Headquarters in Corvallis, and the District offices in Waldport and Florence. The comment period ended at the close-of-business on June 9, 2006. Two persons, one

organization, and one federal agency responded to this request. Comments are summarized, with Forest Service responses, in appendix D of the Project EA.

In their biological opinions of the following Siuslaw National Forest programmatic biological assessments, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has concurred with our findings that the project will not jeopardize the existence of bald eagles, northern spotted owls, and marbled murrelets:

- Programmatic Biological Assessment of Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Activities in the North Coast Province Which Might Disturb Bald Eagles, Northern Spotted Owls, or Marbled Murrelets. (FWS biological opinion reference #: 1-7-05-F-0664).
- Biological Assessment of Habitat-Modification Projects Proposed During Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006 in the North Coast Province, Oregon that Would Affect Bald Eagles, Northern Spotted Owls, or Marbled Murrelets, or Would Modify the Critical Habitats of the Northern Spotted Owl or the Marbled Murrelet. (FWS biological opinion reference #: 1-7-05-F-0005).

The FWS terms and conditions are included in the project design criteria.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the Lobster Landscape Management Project Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the activities described do not constitute a major Federal action and would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination was made in light of the following factors:

Context

This action is very small in terms of society as a whole. Project activities have been viewed and approved in a Regional context through the Siuslaw National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990) as amended by the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (USDA, USDI 1994). This action only affects a small portion of the Forest, which in turn, is a very small portion of the Region.

The site-specific activities that are authorized and guided by this decision are limited in scope and duration. Some minor adverse effects are expected. However, given the renewable nature of the resources and the high growth rates of coastal vegetation, these effects are expected to be short-term. No long-term adverse effects are expected.

Intensity

Project actions will have both beneficial and adverse effects. Decommissioning roads or commercial thinning may be considered adverse effects. However, I have considered the benefits that the ecosystem will receive from implementing the Project actions and find that the overall beneficial effects to the

ecosystem outweigh any short-term adverse effects. Further, I find that when considered alone, the adverse effects of this project are not significant (EA, chapter 3).

No significant adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified (EA, page 96).

The characteristics of the geographic area do not make it uniquely sensitive to the effects of project actions. Past actions of similar intensity in similar areas have not indicated any significant adverse effects (EA, chapter 3).

The Lobster Landscape Management Project Environmental Assessment has disclosed direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soil, water, aquatic and terrestrial species, and other components of the human environment. There are no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects anticipated from implementing project actions. Project actions will speed the development of late-successional habitat in late-successional and riparian reserves and improve watershed function. The analysis of cumulative effects considered past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on National Forest lands as well as for other ownerships in the affected watershed (EA, chapter 3).

Based on the pre-project survey and record search of the Project area, actions associated with the Project will have “no effect” (as defined in 36 CFR 800.5 [b]) on any listed or eligible heritage (cultural) resources. If a heritage site is discovered during project implementation, work will be stopped until the site is evaluated or the project has been altered to avoid the site (EA, pages 83, 95, and 96; EA, appendix A, page 5).

Based on the fisheries biological assessment and wildlife biological evaluation prepared for the Project, the effects on aquatic species and Federally listed terrestrial species are not found to be significant (Biological Assessment, Lobster Landscape Management Project (fisheries), December, 2005; Lobster Landscape Management Project Wildlife Report and Biological Evaluation, February 2006; EA, chapter 3; EA, appendix A, pages 1 through 5).

The Project is in compliance with relevant Federal, State and local laws, regulations and requirements designed for the protection of the environment. The Project will meet or exceed State water and air quality standards and is consistent with the Oregon Coastal Management Program as required by the Coastal Zone Management Act (EA, page 96; EA, appendix A, page 5).

The effects from the Project on the quality of the human environment are not found to be highly controversial (EA, chapters 1 and 3).

The Project’s environmental effects are not uncertain or unknown. Planned actions are similar to those already accomplished on similar lands on the Forest and several scientific studies have been conducted that support the Project’s treatment strategies for plantations (EA, chapters 1 and 3).

Actions that will be implemented by the Project do not set a precedent for future actions, because similar actions have been implemented in the past (EA, page 9; chapter 3, including page 96).

Other Disclosures

All measures contained in the Project EA and appendix A will be incorporated to comply with the Record of Decision (October 2005) for the Pacific Northwest Region Invasive Plant Program, Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants Final Environmental Impact Statement. Actions will be designed to prevent the spread of invasive plants, including noxious and undesirable weeds (EA, pages 57 and 58). Cleaning of off-road equipment pursuant to Executive Order 13112, dated February 3, 1999, will be required. (EA, appendix A, page 15).

The Project will have no significant adverse effects on wetlands, floodplains, farm land, range land, park land, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or inventoried roadless areas; minority groups, civil rights, women, or consumers; Indian social, economic, subsistence rights, and sacred sites; and heritage resources (EA**,** pages 83, 95 and 96). Actions will be consistent with the scenic quality objectives for the planning area (EA, page 84).

Findings Required By Other Laws

Based on the analysis in the Lobster Landscape Management Project Environmental Assessment, I find the selected alternative to be consistent with the Siuslaw National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1990), as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (USDA, USDI 1994) and is designed to meet or exceed the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy as set forth in the Northwest Forest Plan (EA, page 93).

The selected alternative is consistent with the National Forest Management Act implementing regulations, including the seven management requirements listed in 36 CFR 219.27, a through g:

a. **Resource protection**—The Project EA includes criteria designed to protect resources and will apply practices as described in General Water Quality Best Management Practices (BMPs), Pacific Northwest Region, November 1988 (EA, appendix A);

b. **Vegetation manipulation of tree cover**—Plantations will be thinned to speed the development of late-successional habitat. (EA, chapter 1; EA, chapter 3, pages 28 to 46);

c. **Silvicultural practices that apply to timber harvest and cultural treatments**—Most older (25 to 50 years old) plantations will be commercially thinned. (EA, chapter 1; EA chapter 3, pages 28 to 46);

d. **Even-aged management in the forest**—No even-aged management is proposed. (EA, chapter 1; EA, chapter 3, pages 28 to 46);

e. **Riparian area protection**—Special attention has been given to riparian areas by maintaining existing shade, decommissioning roads, and planting trees in riparian areas. These actions are expected to enhance

water quality and improve fish habitat in the long term. (EA, chapter 1; EA, chapter 2, pages 19 and 20; EA, chapter 3, pages 58 through 74; EA, appendix A);

f. **Conservation of soil and water resources**—The Project is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives and includes best management practices (BMPs) and other measures designed to protect, enhance, or minimize effects to soil and water resources. Actions are expected to enhance water quality in the long term. (EA, chapter 1; EA, chapter 2, pages 19, 20; EA, chapter 3, pages 58 through 74, and 93; EA, appendix A); and

g. **Preserve and enhance the diversity of plant and animal communities**—The project is expected to improve habitat conditions for several plant and animal species. Thinning plantations, creating snags and down wood, and planting trees in upland areas will increase diversity of plant and animal communities (EA, chapter 1; EA, chapter 2, pages 19 and 20; EA, chapter 3, pages 28 through 46; EA, appendix A).

Implementation Date

Implementation of this project may not proceed until five (5) working days after the close of the 45-day appeal filing period. Activities, including service contract preparation and solicitation of bids, may proceed immediately.

Administrative Review and Appeal

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.7. Written notice of appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Official, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623 within 45 days of the date of publication of the notice for this decision in the Eugene Register-Guard (Eugene, Oregon). Individuals or organizations, who have expressed interest in the Lobster Landscape Management Project, may file an appeal. The appeal must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14:

- The appeal must state that the document is an appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215;
- The name, address, and telephone number (if applicable) of the appellant must be included, and must identify the decision by title, subject, date of decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official;
- The appeal narrative must be sufficient to identify the specific change(s) to the decision sought by the appellant or portions of the decision to which the appellant objects, and must state how the Responsible Official's decision fails to consider comments previously provided; and
- If applicable, the appeal should state how the appellant believes this decision violates law, regulation, or policy.

Appeals (including attachments) may be filed by regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand delivery, express delivery, or messenger service. The publication date of the notice for this decision in the newspaper of record is the sole means of calculating the appeal-filing deadline, and those wishing to appeal should not rely on dates or timelines from any other source. E-mail appeals must be submitted to: appeals-

pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us, and must be in one of the following three formats: Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf) or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf). FAX appeals must be submitted to: 503-808-2255. Appeals may be hand-delivered to the Resource Planning and Monitoring Office, 333 SW First Ave., Portland, between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday-Friday.

Contact Person

For further information regarding this project, contact Paul Thomas at (541) 563-8426, or Bruce Buckley at (541) 563-8412, Central Coast Ranger District-ODNRA, Waldport Office, 1049 SW Pacific Coast Hwy., Waldport, OR 97394.

Responsible Official:

_____ _____

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Date