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

# Shingle Lane Commercial Thinning Harvest

# FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

The Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District of the Bureau of Land Management has analyzed a proposal called the **Shingle Lane Commercial Thinning and Regeneration Harvest**. This FONSI is for the commercial thinning and density management portions only and would result in the harvest of second-growth timber within the Elk Creek Watershed located in Sections 27; T23S R4W; W.M.

The Environmental Assessment (EA), OR-104-99-10, contains a description and analysis of the proposed action. A summary of the analysis contained in the EA shows:

1). Approximately 250 acres were analyzed for potential harvest activity (EA, pg. 3) of which activities would occur on 158 acres representing less than 0.1% of the watershed landbase.

2). The project would not be expected to impact any special status plants or cultural resources (EA, pg. 13).

3). The actions anticipated under this analysis are covered under the *Formal consultation and written concurrence on FY 2003-2008 management activities (Ref.# 1-15-03-F-160)* (February 21, 2003, Table 1a) with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS). BLM requested reinitiated consultation (Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0511) for these actions on June 8, 2005. FWS issued a Letter of Concurrence (June 24, 2005) which concluded that this action is ". . . not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle, spotted owl, spotted owl critical habitat, murrelet, and murrelet critical habitat" (pg. 30).

4). Since the OC coho salmon is only a candidate for listing, ESA consultation Biological Opinion is not required; however, BLM's Biological Assessment determined the proposed project to be a Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA) for the coho. Informal consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA – fisheries) has been completed. Their Letter of Concurrence (October 28, 2004) concurred with BLM's determination. In addition, the proposed activities were analyzed for, and determined to not adversely affect Essential Fisheries Habitat (EFH).

This proposal is in conformance with the *"Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS) dated October 1994 and its associated *Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resources Management Plan* (RMP) dated June 2, 1995. This proposal is located on lands within the Matrix and Riparian Reserve Land Use Allocations. The RMP permits ". . . timber harvest and other silvicultural activities in that portion of the matrix with suitable forest lands, according to management actions/directions . . ." (RMP, pg. 33). The RMP (pg. 25) also permits silvicultural practices within the Riparian Reserves in order to ". . . acquire desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy [ACS] objectives." This proposal would also help to provide ". . . a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products that will help maintain the stability of local and regional economies . . ." (RMP pg. 3).

Two alternatives were analyzed: the "no action" and the proposed action alternative. Road renovation and improvement, fuel treatment (burning landing piles), and habitat restoration would also be accomplished as part of the proposed action.

**Finding of No Significant Impacts:**

I have reviewed this Environmental Assessment for any potentially significant environmental impacts. The tests of significance as described in 40 CFR 1508.27 (see attached) were applied. Based on the site specific analysis summarized in the EA and noted above, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action with significant impacts to the quality of the human environment therefore an Environmental Impact Statement does not need to be prepared.

NOTE: This finding is only for the commercial thinning and density management portions of the environmental assessment. The regeneration portion would be covered under a separate finding.

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Marci L. Todd
Swiftwater Field Manager

Date

**Summary of Effects of the Proposed Action**

| Context (What?) | Intensity (How Much?) | Reason for not being Significant |
|---|---|---|
| **Modification of Northern spotted owl dispersal habitat** (EA pg. 19, para. 1). | Modification of 157 acres of spotted owl dispersal and designated Critical Habitat. | Formal consultation (pg. 29) with the USF&WS concluded that ". . . disturbance activities and management activities . . . are not likely to adversely modify spotted owl or murrelet critical habitat because the potential impacts will be sufficiently dispersed over time and space."<br><br>Stands would continue to function as dispersal habitat, but in a slightly degraded condition. Functionality should be restored in 10 to 15 years. |
| **Disturbance to spotted owl nesting behavior** (EA pg. 19, para. 2). | Units 1, 6 and 7 (83 ac.) are within 0.25 miles of a known nest site or activity center. | Harvest activities would be seasonally restricted from March 1-June 30 during the nesting season (EA pg. 11, para. 9b). |
| **Impacts to Northern goshawk (Bureau Sensitive) due to disturbance of nesting** (EA pg. 19, para. 3). | Disturbance from operations on 147 acres. | If a northern goshawk is discovered, seasonal restrictions would be applied within 0.25 mile of the nest site from March 1 - July 30 (or until the young have dispersed) and a 30-acre core area would be established around the active nest site and alternate nest sites.<br><br>NOTE: 2004 surveys did not find any nesting goshawks.<br><br>Thinning the stands in the project area would increase the amount of foraging and roosting habitat available. |
| **Soil compaction and displacement from road building** (EA pg. 19, para. 5) | New spur construction would cover about 0.8 acres (0.4% of project area). | All new construction would be decommissioned the same dry season that logging is completed. |

| Context (What?) | Intensity (How Much?) | Reason for not being Significant |
|---|---|---|
| **Soil compaction and displacement from to logging activities** (EA pg. 20, para. 1). | Skyline yarding compaction would be light and superficial (less than two acres).<br><br>Incidental tractor yarding would cover about six percent of the tractor-yarded ground (less than an acre). | Compaction would be confined largely to the topsoil and would eventually heal satisfactorily without mitigation.<br><br>Tractor yarding would use designated skid trails. Subsoiling of skid trails would ameliorate some of the compaction on these units. |
| **Increase in the probability of harvest-related debris avalanches** (EA pg. 20, para. 2). | Potential occurrence on 25 acres of FGR slopes. | Although the probability of debris avalanches would increase, it would still be in the low range (<10 percent) as under the no action alternative and would be expected to be within the range of natural variation.<br><br>The extent of harvest-related landslides inside the units would be small and of low consequence to soil productivity. Five small (0.03 to 0.1 acre) and two medium-sized (0.15 and 0.5 acres) debris avalanches occurred shortly after the stands were clearcut (EA pg. 14, para.3). |
| **In-unit surface erosion** due to soil disturbance (EA pg. 20, para. 2). | Harvest across 157 unit acres. | Erosion would be negligible due to high soil infiltration, the cover provided by duff, woody debris and residual vegetation, and the waterbarring of any yarding trail (skyline or tractor) that can channel water. |
| **Increase in stream sedimentation** from timber felling, yarding, and hauling (EA pg. 21, para. 2). | Harvest across 157 acres and hauling on 5.8 miles of haul road (EA pg. 24, para. 2).<br>. | Some level of erosion from new construction would occur during the first season flush and would then decrease thereafter. Any sediment would filter onto the forest floor and not reach streams. Virtually no sediment would reach streams from thinned stands due to the "no-harvest" buffer acting as a filter strip (EA pg. 21, para. 3).<br><br>If harvest-related landslides do occur their size would tend to be small (less than 0.1 acre) and the risk of them reaching streams would be low (EA pg. 21, para. 4). |

| Context (What?) | Intensity (How Much?) | Reason for not being Significant |
|---|---|---|
| **Increase in water temperature** from stream canopy reduction (EA pg. 21, para. 2). | Approximately 30 acres of treatment within the Riparian Reserve (EA pg. 5, Table 1). | There would be no increase in stream temperature. All streams are seasonal (i.e., stop flowing by late spring) and therefore do not contribute to elevated water temperature in Elk Creek. A reduction in canopy from thinning near these streams would have no effect on downstream stream temperature. |
| **Increase in water yield and peak flows** due to removal of forest canopy (EA pg. 21, para. 2). | Harvest across 157 unit acres. | Slight increases in summer flow would benefit riparian areas, which are often moisture limited during the summer (EA pg. 22, para. 5). Any possible increase in peak flow, as a result of timber harvest, would also likely be reduced by the buffering influence of the Riparian Reserve (EA pg. 23, para. 1). |
| **Adverse impacts to fish populations and aquatic habitat** (EA pg. 23, para. 2). | Harvest across 157 unit acres and hauling on 5.8 miles of haul road (EA pg. 24, para. 2). | Riparian Reserve and streamside no-harvest buffers along all streams that would effectively filter any sediment potentially generated from ground disturbance and the majority of the proposed actions are located well upstream of fish-bearing habitat (EA pg. 23, para. 2).<br><br>In-stream sedimentation from road construction, maintenance of existing roads, and timber haul is not expected to be measurable in streams and would not be above existing background levels (EA pg. 24, para. 2).<br><br>Impacts from harvest related landslides are not reasonably certain to occur, due low probability of occurrence (less than 10 percent), size of potential landslide would likely be less than 0.1 acre and; harvest units with potential harvest related landslide areas are located approximately 1000 ft from fish-bearing waters and 2600 ft from coho bearing waters (EA pg. 24, para. 2). |

**Test for Significant Impacts.** (40 CFR 1508.27)

1. Has impacts (both beneficial and adverse) determined to be severe? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** No identified impacts are judged to be severe.

2. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** Considering the remoteness of the project to local population centers, and the design features governing the proposal (EA, pg. 6 through 12), the likelihood of the project affecting public health and safety is remote and speculative.

3. Adversely effects such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains or ecologically significant or critical areas including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** Reviews (Cultural, Recreation, Wildlife, Hydrology and Fisheries) do not show that the proposed action would adversely affect any of the above characteristics ((EA, Appendix E).

4. Has highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** No controversial effects were noted as a result of environmental analysis or public review.

5. Has highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involves unique or unknown environmental risks? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** The analysis does not indicate that this action would involve unique or unknown risks.

6. Establishes a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** The advertisement, auction, and award of a timber sale contract allowing the harvest of trees is a well-established practice and does not establish a precedent for future actions.

7. Is directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? ( ) Yes (√) No
   **Remarks:** We find that this action would not have a cumulatively significant impact on the environment beyond that already identified in the EIS.

8. Has adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? ( ) Yes (√) No

**Remarks:** The EA (Appendix E) indicates that this action would not adversely affect any sites, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. May adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Aquatic Species | ( ) Yes | (√) No |
| Botanical Species | ( ) Yes | (√) No |
| Terrestrial Species | ( ) Yes | (√) No |

**Remarks:** Informal consultation with NOAA - fisheries (October 28, 2004) concurred with BLM's "not likely to adversely affect" determination for listed fish.

Botanical surveys did not identify the presence of any T&E plants therefore this action would have no effect.

The actions anticipated under this analysis are covered under the *Formal consultation and written concurrence on FY 2003-2008 management activities (Ref.# 1-15-03-F-160)* (February 21, 2003, Table 1a) with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) which concluded (pg. 29) that the project would ". . . not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl, murrelet and bald eagle, and are not likely to adversely modify spotted owl or murrelet critical habitat . . ." (EA, pg. 29). The BLM is currently reinitiating the FY2003-2008 formal consultation. Since this project results in a "not likely to adversely affect" for listed species, and the action has been determined to not make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources, this project has been determined to be insignificant or discountable and would not violate section 7(a)(2) or 7(d) of the Endangered Species Act.

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment? ( ) Yes (√) No

**Remarks:** We find that this action would not threaten a violation of Federal, State, local or tribal law imposed for the protection of the environment.