

Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

South River Field Office

EA# OR-105-01-01

Date Prepared: November 15, 2002

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 Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 Project. Two alternatives were analyzed consisting of no action identified as Alternative 1, and a proposed action identified as Alternative 2. The Alternatives are described in Chapter 2 of the EA (pp. 4-8).

The following Critical Elements of the Human Environment would not be affected by the proposed Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 Project: Non-Native, Invasive Species; Wastes, Hazardous or Solid.

The proposed Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 Project is consistent with Executive Order 12898 which addresses Environmental Justice in minority and low-income populations. There would be no impacts to low-income or minority populations that have been identified by the BLM internally or through the public involvement process. Correspondence with local Native American tribal governments has not identified any known unique or special resources in the project areas which provide religious, employment, subsistence or recreation opportunities. Employment associated with the project would be performed by local contractors who engage in similar types of work throughout Douglas County.

No Native American religious concerns or values were identified in association with the project areas, so there would be no effect on Native American Religious Concerns (Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(8)).

The proposed Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 Project would not occur in/on wetlands, park lands, prime farmlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. There are no designated wilderness areas on the Roseburg District. No unique characteristics would be impacted (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(3)).

Surveys for cultural resources have been conducted. The BLM's Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act have been completed in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (EA, p. 26). There would be no impacts to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(8)).

There are no listed fish species in the project areas because of long-standing natural barriers to migration. The uppermost barrier is situated approximately 2 miles below the closest of the proposed thinnings, as described in Table 11 in the EA (p. 21). Essential Fish Habitat is located downstream of this barrier. The proposed thinnings would have no effect on water quality or anadromous habitat, and was determined as “No Effect” on the Oregon Coast coho salmon and Essential Fish Habitat, as discussed in the EA (pp. 42-43). Potential effects to the Oregon Coast steelhead trout would be the same as for the coho salmon.

Because the proposed projects have the potential to modify 112 acres of nesting, roosting and foraging habitat in the Diet Coq project area, and 54 acres of similar habitat in the Angel Hair project area, these actions were determined as “Likely to Adversely Affect” the northern spotted owls. The thinning of remaining units providing only dispersal and possibly limited foraging opportunities was determined “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” owls. These determinations will be consulted with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (EA, p. 38-39)

The proposed action would treat 257 acres within Critical Habitat Unit (CHU) OR-62, representing about one percent of the total acreage in the CHU. The treatments would modify 54 acres of nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the short term (5-15 years). The remaining 203 acres of thinning would only occur in dispersal habitat. Canopy levels would remain above 40 percent, and return to near closure in the same time frame. As a consequence, the proposed action would not adversely modify function of the CHU and was determined as “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” its intended purpose, and will be consulted with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (EA, p. 40)

With the implementation of Daily Operational Restrictions during the nesting season on thinning units located within ¼-mile of suitable but unsurveyed marbled murrelet habitat, the potential for disturbance associated with the proposed actions was determined as “Not Likely to Adversely Affect” the species. These restrictions consist of a prohibition on operations from two hours before sunset until two hours following sunrise. Where surveys in suitable habitat have not detected murrelet occupancy, there would be “No Effect.” (EA, pp. 39-40)

Because the thinning of units identified as having suitable nesting habitat could modify the existing conditions and render them unsuitable for nesting, in the short term, it was determined that these portions of the proposal are “Likely to Adversely Affect” the marbled murrelet, and will be consulted with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This would specifically apply to all of the Diet Coq units with the exception of C and N; Unit F of the Angel Hair proposal; and Units A, B and C of the Golden Gate proposal. Thinning of the remaining units contained in the proposal was determined to have “No Effect.” (EA, pp. 39-40)

The project areas are outside the accepted range of Kincaid’s lupine, as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The projects were determined to have “No Effect” on the species. (EA, p. 40)

There would be no significant adverse impacts to any special status species (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(9)), and any impacts would be within the range and scope of those analyzed in the Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS).

Port-Orford-cedar is present in portions of the proposed thinning areas and along portions of the anticipated haul routes. With the project design features and controls described, and in light of the scattered occurrence of Port-Orford-cedar within the project areas, little or no increase in the rate of spread of the root disease would be anticipated, and the project design features specified might affect a reduction in the rate of spread of the disease in the project areas. (EA, pp. 36-37).

The action is consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27(b)(10)). The impacts of the proposed action on the human environment do not exceed those anticipated in the PRMP/EIS.

As a result of the analysis, of the twelve 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.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13212, the BLM must consider the effects of this decision on the President's National Energy Policy. Within the project areas, there are no known energy resources with the potential for commercial development, nor are there any pipelines, electrical transmission lines, or energy producing or processing facilities. As a consequence, the proposed Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 project would have no known adverse effect, either direct or indirect, on National Energy Policy

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 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.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date