

Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

Bell Mountain Commercial Thinning & Density Management

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
EA# OR-104-06-09

Bell Mountain Commercial Thinning and Density Management will occur on four scattered units (approximately 151 acres) of 47 to 54 year-old second-growth forest located in the Elk Creek/Upper Umpqua Fifth-Field Watershed in Sections 14, 23, and 27; T22S, R07W; W.M. Within these 151 acres, approximately two acres will be removed for the development of temporary spur roads.

This project is within the Connectivity/Diversity Block (26 acres), General Forest Management Area (106 acres), and Riparian Reserve (19 acres) Land Use Allocations and will contribute approximately 2.5 million board feet of timber to help meet the Roseburg District's annual sale plan.

Test for Significant Impacts.

1. Has significant impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (1))?

Yes No

Remarks: Any impacts will be consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS).

2. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (2))?

Yes No

Remarks: The increase in fuel loadings in Units 14A, 23A, and 27A from 11 tons per acre to 15 tons per acre and in Unit 27B from 18 tons per acre to 27 tons per acre will not dramatically increase the fire risk to the area for several reasons (EA, pgs. 29-30):

- scattered tops and limbs will decrease the recreational off-highway vehicle use in the areas accessible to the public which is a source of ignition for wildfires;
- the scattered slash will suppress underbrush which could increase risk;
- Units 27A and 27B are not readily accessible to most of the public as they are located behind gated access roads;
- although the harvest units are located within the Wildland Urban Interface boundary described in the Roseburg District Fire Management Plan, homes in the area currently have at least 30 feet of defensible space (K. Kosel, 2006, pers. obs.);

- all homes in the Wildland Urban Interface are at least 0.3 miles away from the proposed units; and
- most of the fine fuels, less than 1 inch diameter, will degrade within two years after harvest which will dramatically decrease the risk of a fire building in intensity to consume larger diameter fuels.

Treatment of logging slash by prescribed fire has the potential to affect air quality locally. Burning will be accomplished under guidelines established by the Oregon Smoke Management Plan and Visibility Protection Plan to avoid adverse effects. Any impacts to local air quality will be localized and of short duration, consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS, pp. 4-9 to 4-12).

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 (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (3))?

Yes No

Remarks: Unique geographic characteristics (such as those listed above) are absent from the project area and will not be affected.

4. Has highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (4))?

Yes No

Remarks: Comments were solicited from affected tribal governments, adjacent landowners and affected State and local government agencies. No comments were received from these sources. A letter was sent (October 20, 2006) to adjacent landowners. Two comments were received. One commenter requested to be added to the mailing list for future documents regarding this project and another expressed general support of the proposed project (Decision, pg. 5).

During the thirty day public review period for the Bell Mountain EA (which ended on February 8, 2007), comments were received from one business and four organizations (two of which submitted comments jointly). Upon reviewing the comments received, those that were specific to the Bell Mountain project and warranted additional clarification were addressed on pages 5-8 of the Decision Document. However, no comments were received that are considered highly controversial.

5. Has highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks to the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (5))?

Yes No

Remarks: The risks to the human environment from the proposed project were analyzed and found not to be highly uncertain or unique (EA, pg. 17, 59).

6. Establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (6))?

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 related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (7))?

Yes No

Remarks: The cumulative impacts to forest vegetation (pg. 20), wildlife (pgs. 27-29), fire and fuels management (pgs. 29-30), hydrology (pgs. 34-35), soils (pg. 39), fish populations and habitat (pg. 41) were analyzed in the Bell Mountain EA and found not to be significant.

8. Has adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (8))?

Yes No

Remarks: The BLM conducted surveys for cultural resources and completed Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (EA, pgs. 16, 46). No cultural resources were discovered (EA, pg. 16). It has been determined that there will be no effect to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, pg. 46).

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 (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (9))?

Botanical Species Yes No

Fish Species Yes No

Wildlife Species Yes No

Remarks: Surveys did not identify the presence of any federally threatened or endangered botanical species; therefore the action will have no effect on listed botanical species (EA, pgs. 43-44).

There are currently no listed, or proposed for listing, fish species in the Roseburg District (EA, pgs. 39-40, 46). There is Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Coho salmon or Chinook

salmon approximately 0.10 miles from proposed Unit 27A (EA, pg. 42). However, the project will not adversely affect EFH in Hancock Creek, Elk Creek, or their tributaries (EA, pgs. 42-43). Therefore, there are no further consultation obligations with the National Marine Fisheries Service (EA, pg. 46).

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been completed for the federally threatened bald eagle, northern spotted owl, and marbled murrelet and for spotted owl critical habitat and murrelet critical habitat (EA, pg. 46).

A Letter of Concurrence was received from the USFWS (*Reinitiation of consultation on Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management FY 2005-2008 Management Activities* [Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0511]) dated June 24, 2005 which concurred with the Roseburg District's conclusion that the proposed commercial thinning or density management activities are not likely to adversely affect Northern spotted owls and are not likely to adversely affect the Northern spotted owl as a result of disturbance (pgs. 19-20). The USFWS also concurred with the Roseburg District's conclusion that the proposed commercial thinning and density management activities are not likely to adversely affect the marbled murrelet within Zone 2 and within the 1.3 mile Restriction Corridor (pgs.8-11, Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0511).

In addition, A Letter of Concurrence was received from the USFWS (*Reinitiation of consultation on Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management FY 2005-2008 Management Activities. Disturbance to marbled murrelets* [Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0596]) dated July 20, 2005 which concurred with the Roseburg District's conclusion that the proposed commercial thinning and density management activities are not likely to adversely affect the marbled murrelet as a result of disturbance within Zone 2 and within the 1.3 mile Restriction Corridor (pg. 7)

Project design features (EA, pgs. 11-15) will be implemented in compliance with the letters of concurrence.

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (10))?

() Yes (✓) No

Remarks: The measures described above ensure that Bell Mountain Commercial Thinning and Density Management will be consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws. The impacts of the silvicultural treatment on the human environment will not exceed those anticipated by the Roseburg District PRMP/EIS.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13212, the BLM must consider the effects of this decision on the President's National Energy Policy. Within the project area, there are no known energy resources with commercial potential. There are no pipelines, electrical transmission lines, or energy producing or processing facilities. As a consequence, there will be no known adverse effect on National Energy Policy.

Based on the analysis of potential impacts contained in the environmental assessment, I have determined that Bell Mountain Commercial Thinning and Density Management will not have a 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 effects of the silvicultural treatment will be within those anticipated and already analyzed in the *Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS, 1994) and will be 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.

Marci L. Todd, Field Manager
Swiftwater Field Office

Date