

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

**O.M. Hubbard II
Density Management Study**

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
EA# OR-104-07-07

Decision Document

**U.S. Department of Interior
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Roseburg BLM District, Oregon**

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SECTION 1 – THE DECISION

Decision

It is my decision to authorize the implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative as described in the O.M. Hubbard II Density Management Study Environmental Assessment (EA) in Chapters 1 and 2 (EA #OR-104-07-07; pgs. 1-3, 7-10). The Project Design Features that will be implemented as part of the Action Alternative are described on pages 11-15 of the O.M. Hubbard II EA. These project design features have been developed into contract stipulations and will be implemented as part of the timber sale contract.

O.M. Hubbard II Density Management Study will occur on one unit (approximately 131 acres) of mid-seral, second-growth forest located in the Upper Umpqua 5th Field Watershed in Section 19 of T. 25 S., R. 7 W. and Section 24 of T. 26 S., R. 8 W., Willamette Meridian. There is an additional 97 acres of untreated, mid-seral stands and 14 acres of early-seral stands that are also part of the study but will not be harvested. Of the 131 acres of treatment, no acres will be removed for the development of spur roads.

This project is within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA, 79 acres) and Riparian Reserve (52 acres) Land Use Allocations and will provide approximately 763 thousand board feet (763 MBF) of timber available for auction. Approximately 463 thousand board feet (463 MBF) of timber will come from the GFMA and 300 thousand board feet (300 MBF) will come from the Riparian Reserve land use allocations. This project is in conformance with management direction from the ROD/RMP.

This decision is subject to administrative remedy under 43 CFR § 5003.2 and 5003.3.

Updated Information

The updated information, described below, has been considered but does not alter the conclusions of the analysis.

1) Unit Configuration:

Approximately 4 acres has been dropped from the unit due to low volume available for harvest (see Figure 1). The 4 acres that was dropped was in the high residual density prescription of the GFMA.

2) Spur Roads in the Riparian Reserve:

There are approximately 0.3 miles of existing spur roads in the Riparian Reserve that will be renovated by blading the road surface and installing drainage structures. After thinning treatments are completed and as part of timbersale contract, these spur roads will be

decommissioned by water-barring, mulching with logging slash and some topsoil where available or with straw if logging slash is not available, and blocking with trench barriers.

In addition, after the timbersale contract has been completed, the Swiftwater Field Office will evaluate the spur roads (both in the Riparian Reserve and in the upland areas of GFMA) and determine if they will be needed again in the as part of future studies. In general, the Swiftwater Field Office no longer accomplishes subsoiling of spur roads through timbersale contracts but through either a separate service contract or through the Roseburg District maintenance organization.

3) Oregon Coast Coho Ecologically Significant Unit:

On February 4, 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) notified the OR/WA BLM that the Oregon Coast coho salmon was listed as threatened under the ESA. The BLM is required to consult with NMFS on any action that the BLM determines “may affect” the Oregon Coast coho salmon.

Prior to NMFS’s determination, the Roseburg District made a determination that this project will result in a “may effect, not likely to adversely affect [NLAA]” in the Upper Umpqua Watershed Density Management Plan Biological Assessment (Sept. 30, 2005) prepared for consultation with NMFS. The stand that will be treated under this O.M. Hubbard II decision was included and considered in the Biological Assessment (pg. 8) as part of the Bare Cupboard Commercial Thin. The configuration of the Bare Cupboard project that was considered in the Biological Assessment has since been split into three separate projects: Bare Cupboard Commercial Thinning and Density Management (February 27, 2007 decision), O.M. Hubbard II Density Management Study, and the upcoming Dog Bone Commercial Thinning and Density Management.

A Letter of Concurrence was received from NMFS for the Upper Umpqua Density Management Plan (NMFS No. 2007/08162) dated January 31, 2008. NMFS concurred with the Roseburg District's conclusion that the proposed activities are *not likely to adversely affect* (NLAA) the Oregon Coast coho salmon. In addition this project will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the Hubbard Creek watershed.

4) Updated Special Status Species List:

On February 6, 2008, the Oregon/Washington BLM revised the special status species list in IM-OR-2008-038. The revisions to the special status species list were in response to comments and corrections that were received from Field Offices as a result of the request transmitted in IM-OR-2007-072 (July 25, 2007).

The updated special status species list applies to all projects initiated on or after February 6, 2008 (IM-OR-2008-038). For the purposes of the IM, “initiated” means that a signed, dated document such as a project initiation letter for the project exists (IM-OR-2008-038). Since O.M. Hubbard II was initiated on May 1, 2007, prior to IM-OR-2008-038, it is not necessary to update the EA based on the aforementioned direction (previous paragraph).

Compliance and Monitoring

Compliance with this decision will be ensured by frequent on the ground inspections by the Contracting Officer’s Representative. Monitoring will be conducted as per the direction given in Appendix I of the RMP (pgs. 189-209).

SECTION 2 – THE DECISION RATIONALE

The Project Design Features described in the EA (pgs. 11-15) will minimize soil compaction, limit erosion, protect slope stability, protect wildlife, protect air and water quality, and protect fish habitat, as well as protect other identified resource values. I have reviewed the resource information contained in the EA and the updated information presented in this decision. This decision recognizes that impacts could occur to some of these resources; however, the impacts to resource values will not exceed those identified in the *Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS). This decision provides timber commodities resulting from silvicultural treatments whose effects to the environment are within those anticipated and already analyzed in the PRMP/EIS.

Chapter 2 of the EA describes two alternatives: a "No Action" alternative and a "Proposed Action" alternative. The No Action alternative was not selected because it did not meet the objectives from pages 5-6 of the EA to: evaluate if alternative thinning treatments accelerate development of late-successional characteristics, comply with Section I of the O&C Act, contribute timber volume towards a sustainable supply of timber, contribute to the Roseburg District's annual allowable sale quantity of 45 MMBF, manage GFMA to assure a high level of sustained timber productivity, or perform density management within the Riparian Reserve to help forest stands develop late-successional characteristics and attain forest conditions that contribute to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. In addition, the EA did not identify any impacts under the proposed action alternative that would be beyond those identified in the PRMP/EIS.

SECTION 3 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

For the O.M. Hubbard II project, comments were solicited from affected tribal governments, adjacent landowners, and affected State and local government agencies. No comments were received from these sources. Adjacent landowners, downstream water rights users, and the general public were notified of the O.M. Hubbard II project through a letter (March 19, 2007), a public field trip held (May 31, 2007), the Fall 2007 *Roseburg District Planning Update* (EA, pgs. 48-49), the Winter 2007 *Roseburg District Planning Update*, and a 30-day public comment period (January 22 - February 21, 2008). Comments were received as a result of the public field trip and the public comment period.

Upon reviewing the comments that were received, the following topics warrant additional clarification specific to the O.M. Hubbard II project: (1) error in discussion of prescription, (2) Riparian Reserve prescription, (3) species diversity of the forest stand, and (4) roads within GFMA and Riparian Reserves.

1) Error in Discussion of Prescription

A comment was received that questioned if the prescription would actually reduce stand density down to as few as eight trees per acre as stated on page 20 of the EA.

The text on page 20 is in error. The post-treatment densities were correctly described in the EA in Table 1 (pgs. 1-2) and Table 3 (pg. 21). The low residual density prescription will leave 25-28 trees per acre, moderate residual density will leave 35-54 trees per acre, and high residual density will leave 65-99 trees per acre.

2) Riparian Reserve Prescription

A comment was received inquiring why different land allocations (matrix and reserve), with different long-range goals, will receive identical thinning prescriptions.

One of the study objectives is to examine alternative riparian strategies through varying “no harvest” buffer widths and various thinning densities adjacent to the buffers to test assumptions of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). The Regional Ecosystem Office review of the BLM Density Management Study noted that for the research results to be useful some of the treated area must be within the Riparian Reserves. By holding thinning density constant regardless of the official NWFP riparian widths, analysis of the influence of different thinning intensities on the stream and buffer environment and conversely the influence of the stream and buffers on the upland with varying buffers is possible. In other words, the intent is to sample microclimate gradients associated with uncut riparian buffers and riparian and upland areas thinned to the same density. To accomplish that, it is necessary to overlay the same treatment on differing land use allocations.

3) Species Diversity of the Forest Stand

A comment was received regarding the influence of O.M. Hubbard II on species diversity of the residual forest stand.

The O.M. Hubbard site contains representation of the common tree species found in the area: Douglas-fir, grand fir, red cedar, hemlock, madrone, chinquapin, alder and maple. Douglas-fir is generally the dominant tree species within a forest stand in the project area. The exact proportion of species representation within and between stands can be highly variable. There is no single correct “natural percentage” for any given tract.

The current composition is within the range found within “natural” stands on the Roseburg District. The thinning treatments will encourage the initiation and growth of shade-tolerant species in the understory changing the proportion of species long-term. In addition, the patch cut areas (from the first treatment) and the low-density thinning area have been planted with a mix of conifer species which provide for additional species diversity and for long-term structural complexity.

4) Spur Roads within GFMA and Riparian Reserve

A comment was received that inquired: (1) why spur roads that are in GFMA that were previously used then subsoiled will not be subsoiled again after the second entry in O.M. Hubbard II and (2) how many miles of spur roads are in Riparian Reserve that will not be subsoiled.

The status of spur roads (i.e. whether or not they will be subsoiled) has been revised and is discussed previously on pages 2-3 of this decision document.

The remaining comments received were general, philosophical in nature, or did not raise substantive issues that would influence my selection of the Action Alternative in the O.M. Hubbard II Density Management Study.

SECTION 4 – PROTEST PROCEDURES

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer [Marci L. Todd] within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states that: “Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.” This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail or facsimile protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Roseburg District Office will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

Protests received more than 15 days after the first publication of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement are not timely filed and shall not be considered. Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to her. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of her review, serve her decision in writing to the protesting party. Upon denial of a protest the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision.

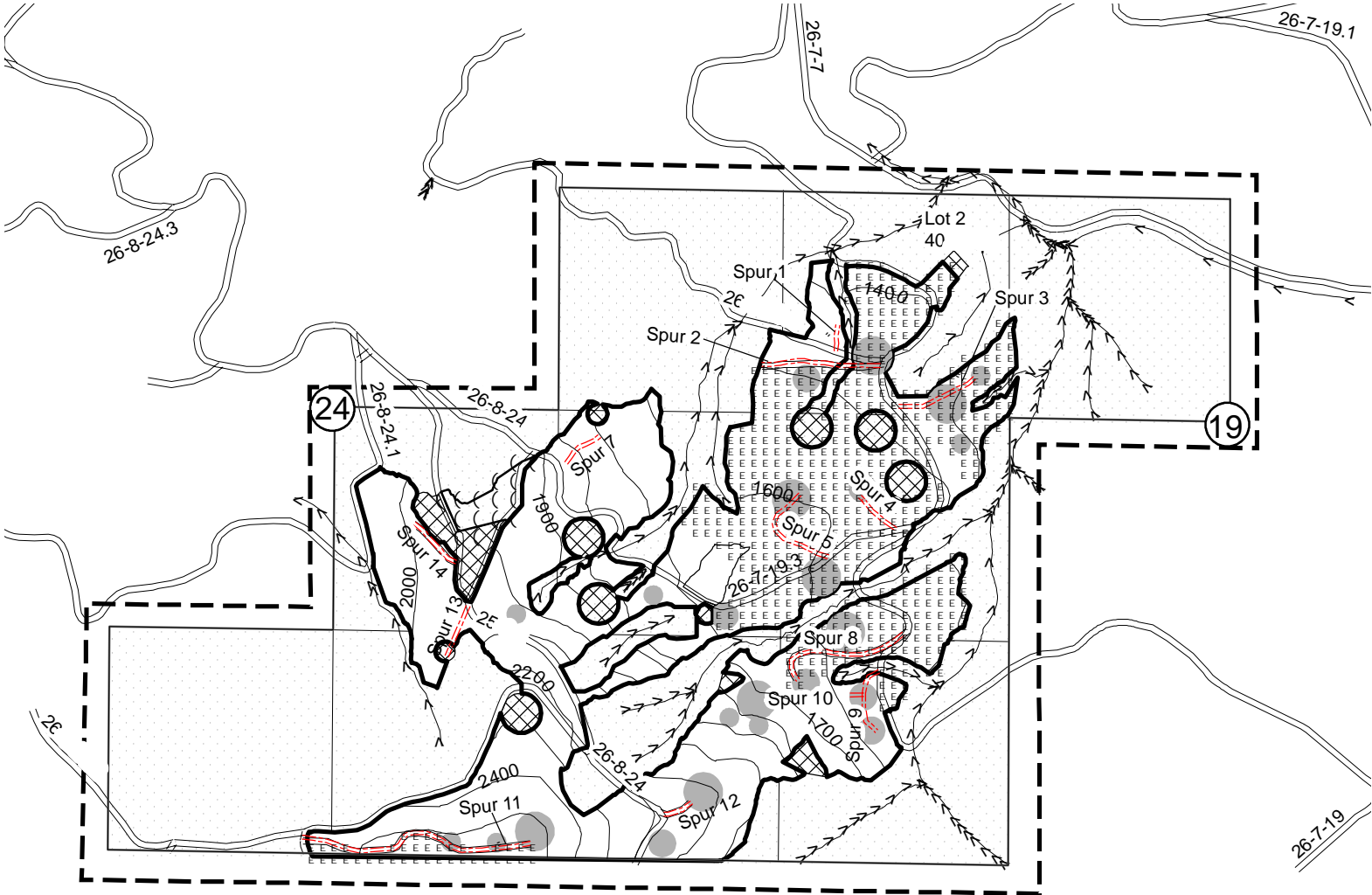
For further information, contact Marci L. Todd, Field Manager, Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd; Roseburg, OR. 97470, (541) 440-4931.

Marci L. Todd, Field Manager
Swiftwater Field Office

Date

Figure 1. O.M. Hubbard II Density Management Study

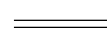




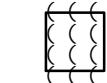
District	Township	Range	Section	Meridian
ROSEBURG	26S	7W	19	WILLAMETTE
	26S	8W	24	



LEGEND

Scale: 1" = 1000 ft

-  Harvest Area - Cable Yarding
-  Harvest Area - Ground Based
-  Reserve Area
-  Leave Islands
-  Existing Patch Openings

-  Existing Road
-  Road to be Renovated
-  Boundary of Cutting Area
-  Boundary of Contract Area
-  Stream
-  Portion of Unit Dropped