



United States Department of the Interior

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COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

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August 22, 2006

1792(OR120)
EA OR125-99-19
5400
OR120-TS06-08

Decision Documentation
for the
Green Peak timber sale OR120-TS06-08
as analyzed in
Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA No. OR125-99-19 and EA Revision

Background:

The Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, using input from District resource staff and public input, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for “Cedar Creek Subwatershed.” There is a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. The Action Alternative proposes a regeneration harvest of approximately 189 acres, a commercial thinning of approximately 906 acres, construction of approximately 1.9 miles of new road, renovation or improvement 11.5 miles of road, and decommissioning 2.3 net miles of road. The project areas, A through F, analyzed in the EA are located within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) and Connectivity land use allocation in T. 26 S., R. 8 W., Sections 10, 20, 22, 32, T. 26 S., R. 9 W., Section 14, T. 27 S., R. 9 W., Sections 10, 14, 15, W.M.

This Decision Documentation applies only to the Proposed Action for Project Area A in the EA, located in T. 26 S., R. 8 W., Section 10, W.M. Project Area A has been given the timber sale name “Green Peak.” Project Area F, “Mother Goose CT”, was sold in FY2001. The other EA Projects Areas, B through E, analyzed in the EA, have been postponed indefinitely. The Proposed Action that analyzed the environmental effects of Project Area A of the *Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA OR125-99-19* (USDI BLM 2000) and the *EA Revision for Port-Orford-cedar Risk Analysis* (USDI BLM 2005) is hereby adopted with the following changes.

The following EA estimates have been field verified for the “Green Peak” timber sale:

- The EA Proposed Action to have a regeneration harvest of an estimated 20 acres has been field verified at 16 acres.
- The Proposed Action to construct an estimated 200 feet of new road identified in the EA has been field verified at 0 feet.
- The Proposed Action to renovate or improve an estimated 1500 feet of road identified in the EA has been field verified at 0 feet.

- The Proposed Action to decommission an estimated 1100 feet of road identified in the EA has been field verified at 0 feet. The road identified for decommissioning in the EA has been previously decommissioned.
- The EA Proposed Action to harvest an estimated 980 MBF from the GFMA land use allocation has been field verified at 936 MBF acres, all of which contributes to the Coos Bay District's Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ).

The *Final - Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* and its *Record of Decision* (USDI BLM 1995) responds to two needs: the need for forest habitat and the need for forest products (USDI BLM 1995 p1). These needs are addressed in the RMP through an ecosystem management strategy under which BLM lands “will be managed to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems from which a sustainable production of natural resources can be provided” (USDI BLM 1995, p. 5).

The following purposes for the project are incorporated in the design features (Special Provisions) of the “Green Peak” timber sale.

- Produce a sustainable supply of timber and other forest commodities to provide jobs and contribute to community stability.
- Work toward meeting the Coos Bay District's Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for Fiscal Year 2000 and beyond as identified in the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan* and its *Record of Decision* (USDI BLM 1995) and the *Northwest Forest Plan* (Interagency 1994).
- Maintain habitat elements such as green retention trees, large down logs and snags to provide connectivity (along with other land use allocations such as Riparian Reserves) between Late-Successional Reserves.
- Provide habitat elements for a variety of organisms associated with early-successional habitat and provide for future development of late-successional habitat elements.
- Work toward the goals established by the Western Oregon Transportation Management Objectives (USDI BLM 1996b) for the South Fork Coos Watershed Analysis Area (USDI BLM 1999).
- Limit Port-Orford-cedar root rot disease (*Phytophthora lateralis*) spread in high risk areas (i.e. next to roads and in riparian areas) and maintain Port-Orford-cedar in low risk areas.

Public comments:

The EA Revision on Port Orford-cedar Risk Analysis for the Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA OR125-99-19, and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public comment during a 30 day comment period in April 2005. An interested party also requested the original EA and maps which were supplied. The comment period closed April 30, 2005.

One response was received by an interested party who expressed their support for the “Green Peak” project. Comments and questions from another interested party were also submitted. There were several comments that expressed disagreement with the proposed action or parts of

the proposed projects. After careful consideration of the comments we have determined that the disagreement lies mainly with implementation of the Coos Bay District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan.

Comment: Harvesting Project Area A will not meet eight management objectives in the Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA:

#1: This project will not “Enhance the growth and vigor of the residual stand.”

Response: The Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA addressed multiple silvicultural treatments such as commercial thinning, density management and regeneration harvests for various stand ages. These treatments would also vary as they are applied to a particular land use allocation such as Late-Successional Reserve (LSR), Riparian Reserve, Connectivity, or Matrix. The management objective to “enhance the growth and vigor of the residual stand” pertains to either a commercial thinning or a density management treatment. This particular management objective does not apply to Project Area A, a matrix regeneration harvest treatment.

#2: This project will not “Manage stand density within the Riparian Reserves to release understory conifers, increase the growth rate of any species.”

Response: This particular management objective pertains to density management treatments in younger stands within the Riparian Reserve. The Riparian Reserve in Project Area A stand is a 95 year old conifer stand and we will not be doing any treatment within the Riparian Reserve.

#3: This project will not “Redirect the trajectory of stands in the Riparian Reserves so they will develop habitat characteristics beneficial for late-successional wildlife species, and thus provide refuge areas and recolonization source areas for the adjacent Matrix lands for the long term.”

Response: Same as #2 above.

#4: This project will not “Maintain habitat elements such as green retention trees, large down logs and snags to provide connectivity (along with other land use allocations such as Riparian Reserves) between Late-Successional Reserves.”

Response: A regeneration harvest on matrix lands requires that these habitat elements be maintained. In a regeneration harvest timber sale such as Green Peak, 6 to 8 green conifer trees per acre will be reserved as green retention trees for wildlife. This project reserved 99 green conifer trees on the 16 acre unit. All snags and all existing large down woody debris are to be reserved in a timber sale contract. Thirty-two additional trees are reserved in the unit and designated to be felled for future large woody debris and would provide at least the minimum 120 lineal feet per acre of coarse woody debris.

#5: This project will not “Provide for future development of late-successional habitat elements through the use of commercial thinning and density management.”

Response: The Green Peak sale unit, Project Area A is a regeneration harvest unit. Matrix

land was designated in the Northwest Forest Plan for timber production and there is no requirement for it to be developed into late-successional habitat.

#6: This project will not “Meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.”

Response: The Green Peak sale unit meets all Matrix regeneration harvest requirements identified in the District RMP and the Forest Plan. A stream adjacent to the harvest unit has been buffered with a full site-tree distance to protect aquatic resources as well as provide benefits to late-successional species. We have determined that the project is consistent with and will not prevent attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.

#7: This project will not “Limit Port-Orford-cedar root rot disease.”

Response: The original EA stated that POC was in Project Area A; however, upon further examination of the sale unit, no POC was found in the unit. The EA Revision for the Cedar Creek Subwatershed EA thoroughly analyzed the POC risk for the Project Area A. Some POC was found on the haul route on low risk sites. Actions within this sale will be consistent with the direction proposed in the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts (USDI May 2004).

#8: This project will not “Reduce existing road mileage within Key Watersheds.”

Response: Project Area A is not located in a key watershed. No new road construction is planned for the Green Peak timber sale.

Comment: The District should meet their ASQ by thinning the backlog of managed plantations that need it, instead of converting more native forests to tree plantations. The no-action alternative should be chosen for Area A because the District should manage the plantations they already have before making more, especially in this location where Area A is one of the few stands in the watershed that is not a plantation.

Response: The District has shifted much of the ASQ harvest to stands that need thinning. The District RMP guides us to conduct regeneration in stands that are greater than 60 years and/or above the culmination of mean annual increment (RMP p. 53). The Green Peak stand meets these guidelines and it is necessary to harvest this stand to meet the District ASQ in the current fiscal year.

Comment: Clearcutting this small fragment would result in loss of [late-successional] habitat that if left alone, would likely continue on its present successional pathway and develop into old growth forest over time. The Northwest Forest Plan requires that you “[p]rovide for retention of old-growth fragments in watersheds where little remains”

Response: The provision for “retention of old-growth fragments in watersheds where little remains” referred to above is the 15% rule for 5th field watersheds on federal land. Within the South Fork Coos River 5th field watershed, 41% of the federal land is in stands > 80 years old, which far exceeds the minimum of 15%.

Comment: There has not been any monitoring for Northern Spotted Owls here since 1991. The BLM should prioritize their regeneration harvest program so stands with the greatest effects on Spotted Owls could be cut many years from now, when LSRs are more recovered.

Response: The stand is not currently functioning as Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Level 1 habitat, suitable for nesting, roosting, and foraging. It is considered Level 2 habitat, suitable for roosting and foraging, but not nesting. The proposed project is not within the designated 1.5 mile home range radius of any known spotted owl sites. The nearest Level 1 suitable habitat and NSO site on the Coos Bay District is approximately 1.9 miles. The nearest NSO site is located 1.6 miles from the unit on the BLM Roseburg District. Because the proposed project would remove a small amount (16 acres) of Level 2 habitat, and is isolated from suitable habitat, known spotted owl sites, and critical habitat, the project is not likely to adversely affect spotted owls. There is no monitoring required for the sale area; however, these nearest known sites continue to be regularly monitored.

The stand age of the proposed sale is 95 years of age. There are currently approximately 18,793 acres of timber stands on Federal lands that are aged 95 years or older in the 5th field watershed. The proposed action would result in the removal of less than one tenth of one percent of these stands. There are currently no other regeneration harvest timber sales planned in the watershed in similar stands.

Comment: Area A surveys performed in February 2000 found multiple confirmed red tree vole nests. Each of these nest or sites should be considered a high priority and buffered with 10 acres of the most suitable RTV habitat surrounding the nests, which would preclude having a sale.

Response: The unit contains red tree vole (RTV) nest sites that were confirmed in 2000. As directed by the 2001 Record of Decision (ROD) for *Amendment to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigating Measures Standards and Guidelines* (Interagency 2001), an Annual Species Review was conducted and published in 2001, 2002, and 2003. The Species Reviews resulted in the removal of all of the known terrestrial wildlife Survey and Manage species that occur, or potentially occur within the range of the Coos Bay District BLM, including red tree voles and the protection of known RTV sites. The 2001 ROD determined that sufficient habitat exists within the reserved areas in the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) area to provide reasonable assurance of persistence of the species. The ROD recognizes that species have persisted over time and have experienced disturbance historically at the local population level.

Ninety-nine live green trees have been marked for retention as wildlife trees following completion of the harvest. The trees marked for retention include all old-growth remnants in the stand and generally represent the largest trees in the stand. It is unknown if any RTV present would continue to occupy the retention trees following harvest, however, adjacent stands on BLM and private lands are

suitable for RTV dispersal. If the stand is occupied, it is likely that the action would have localized negative impacts to individuals; but, the action is not expected to have a measurable impact to the persistence of the species within the watershed.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action Alternative as it applies to the “Green Peak” timber sale described in EA OR125-99-19 and EA Revision for the *Cedar Creek Subwatershed* project.

The design features will be implemented as described in the EA and in the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan* and its *Record of Decision* (RMP) (USDI BLM, May 1995) that conform with 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* (Northwest Forest Plan) and its *Record of Decision* (ROD) (Interagency, 1994).

Consultation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was completed for the project acres in the Biological Opinion for the Fourth Quarter FY 96-98 Timber Sale Program (Ref: 1-7-96-F-411) where the Service determined that the proposed project would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl, the murrelet, or the American bald eagle, and not likely to adversely modify spotted owl or murrelet critical habitat. No marbled murrelets were found in the Green Peak timber sale area from additional protocol surveys completed in 2006.

Consultation on ESA listed fish species by the National Marine Fisheries Service was completed for this project. A letter of concurrence from the NMFS for the project was dated June 21, 2000, (Reference # OSB2000-0064), with a “may affect - not likely to adversely affect” determination.

With the removal of the Oregon Coast coho from the ESA list on January 16, 2006 there are no listed fish species in the Cedar Creek Subwatershed project area at this time. The project actions were determined to “not adversely affect” Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The EA Revision for EA OR125-99-19 (USDI BLM 2005), a risk analysis regarding the spread of root disease in POC, has determined that the project area does not contain POC and is in a low risk area. The analysis also determined that POC alongside the haul road is uninfected and also in a low risk area. On the basis of applying the POC FSEIS risk key, I have determined that the risk of the action to POC is low, thus no site-specific management practices are required. Actions within this project area will be consistent with the direction proposed in the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts* (USDI BLM May 2004).

The proposed project is in compliance with the 2001 Record of Decision for Survey & Manage species as modified as of March 21, 2004. On-site surveys did not find special status or survey and manage species, or find habitat for special status or survey and manage species that would

require surveys. The proposed action would not contribute to the need to list any special status species either under the Endangered Species Act or the OR/WA Special Status Species Policy.

The EA Revision and Revised FONSI do not change the FONSI determination for the original EA.

Rationale:

The Proposed Action is an alternative that meets the intent of the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan by providing timber products, reserving snags and coarse woody debris in the GFMA. The Proposed Action for Project Area A is also consistent with the Riparian Reserve Standards and Guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan. The decision is consistent with the ROD for the *Northwest Forest Plan and the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* and the *Record of Decision* as supplemented and amended.

Administrative Remedies:

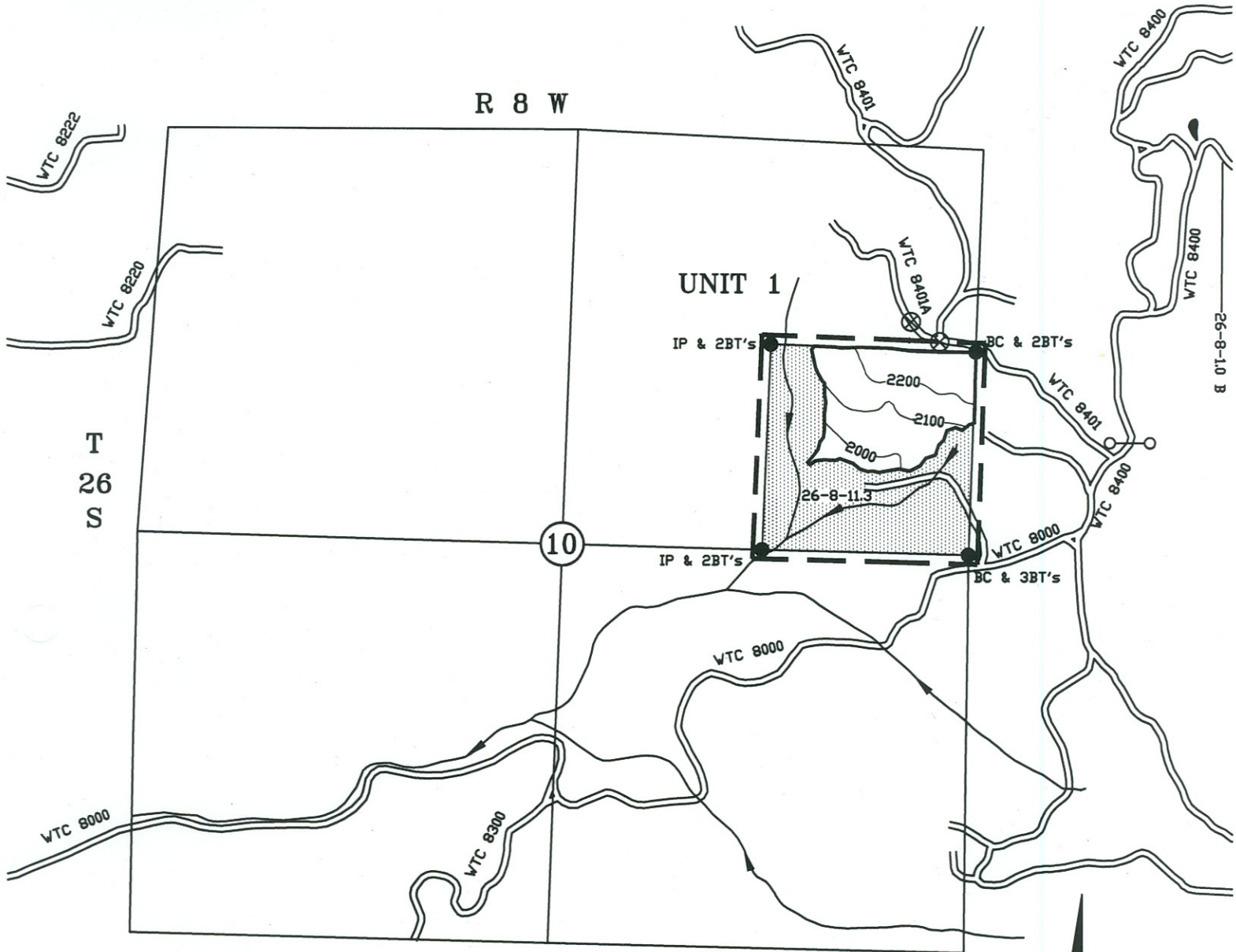
In accordance with *Forest Management Regulations* at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be subject to formal protest until the *Notice of Sale* is published "...in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located..." For this project, the *Notice of Sale* will be published in *The World* newspaper on August 24th and 31st, 2006.

Decision approved by:

M. Elaine Raper
Umpqua Field Manager
M. Elaine Raper

August 22, 2006
Date

T. 26 S., R. 8 W., Sec. 10 Will. Mer.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--------------|
| | Regeneration Cut Unit | | Corner Found |
| | Reserve Area | | Gate |
| | Boundary of Cutting Area,
Blazed, Posted and Painted | | Road Segment |
| | Boundary of Contract Area | | |
| | Existing Road | | |
| | Proposed Landing | | |
| | Stream Channel | | |



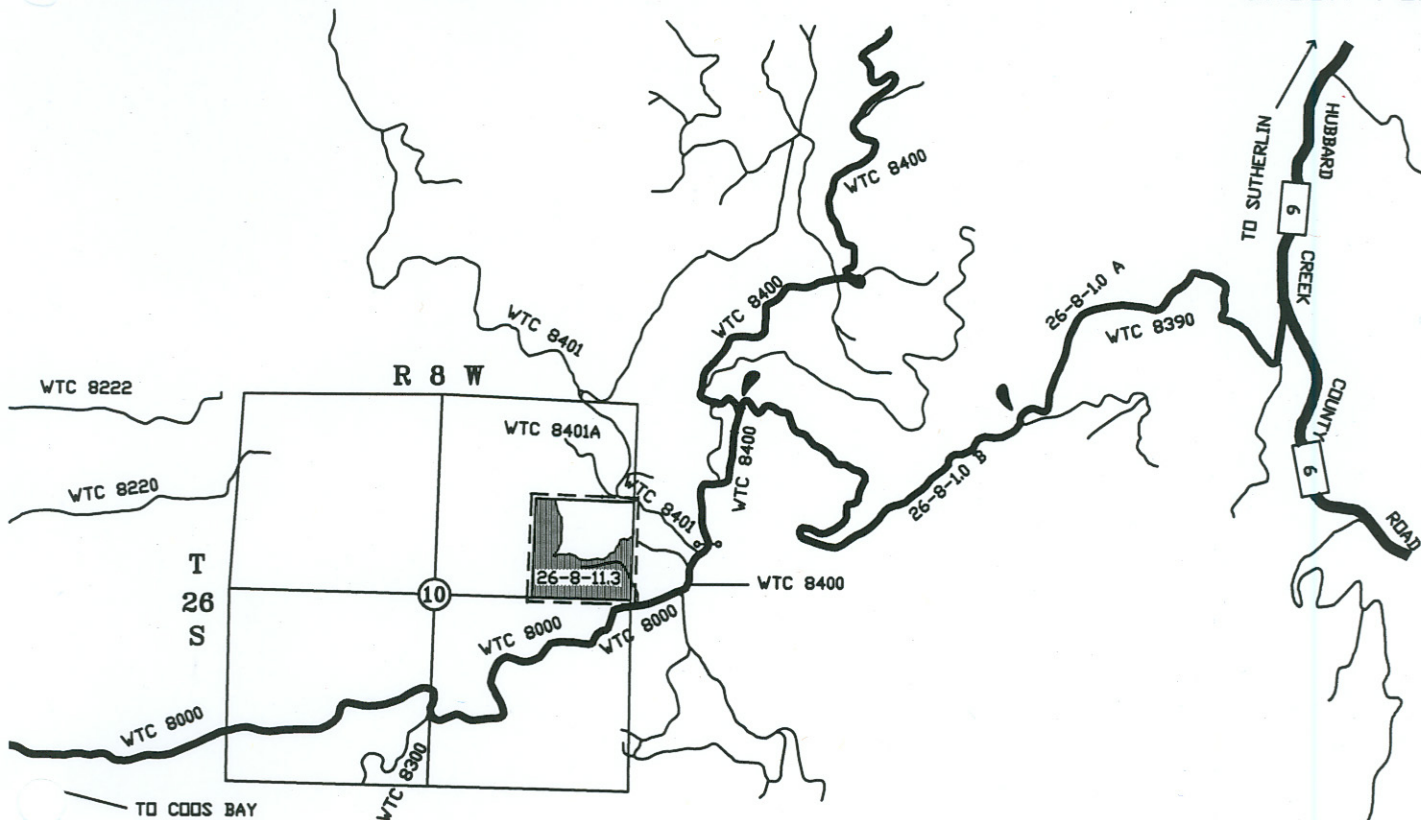
SCALE 1" = 1000'

UNIT 1	-----	16 AC
TOTAL	-----	16 AC
RESERVE	-----	24 AC
TOTAL CONTRACT	-----	40 AC




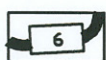



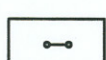
TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 05-02
 EXHIBIT A-1
 Page 1 of 1
 GREEN PEAK

T. 26 S., R. 8 W., Sec. 10 Will. Mer.



LEGEND

-  Regeneration Cut Unit
-  Reserve Area
-  Boundary of Contract Area
-  County Paved Road
-  Primary Gravel Haul Route
-  Secondary Gravel and Dirt Roads
-  Road Segment Break
-  Gate

North

SCALE 2" = 1 MILE