

**South River Commercial Thinning 2002  
Environmental Assessment**

South River Field Office, Roseburg District  
EA# OR-105-02-03

Date Prepared: July 16, 2003

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

The South River Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has completed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for South River Commercial Thinning 2002. Two alternatives were analyzed consisting of Alternative 1, “no action” and Alternative 2, the “proposed action.” (EA, pp. 4-8).

The following Critical Elements of the Human Environment would not be affected by the proposed South River Commercial Thinning 2002: Non-Native, Invasive Species (EA, p. 24); Wastes, Hazardous or Solid.

The proposed South River Commercial Thinning 2002 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 involve 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 potential Native American Religious Concerns (Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b) (8)).

The proposed South River Commercial Thinning 2002 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)).

The BLM has conducted surveys for cultural resources and completed its Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (EA, p. 23). There would be no impacts to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b) (8)).

No adverse impacts to special status wildlife, fish or plant species were identified, as discussed below, arising from implementation of South River Commercial Thinning 2002 (EA, pp. 35-40). As a consequence, there would be no significant adverse impacts to any special status species (CEQ Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b) (9)). 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).

### Northern Spotted Owl

None of the proposed thinning units are located in designated critical habitat for the spotted owl.

Several proposed thinning units are overlapped by the provincial home ranges of one or more pairs of spotted owls, but none of the units are within ¼-mile of an activity center. As a consequence, thinning would constitute “No Effect” for disturbance to nesting owls.

Proposed thinning units provide dispersal and foraging habitat, but not suitable nesting habitat. It was determined that the proposed action would constitute a “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” determination because thinning would modify the utility of dispersal habitat in the short term (<10 years), but would have less than a negligible likelihood of affecting owls in proximity to any of the units. Over the long term, the stands would develop greater suitability for foraging and dispersal.

### Marbled Murrelet

Protocol surveys of suitable marbled murrelet habitat within and contiguous to Units D and J of the Taylor Made project will be conducted in 2003 and 2004. In the event that occupancy was detected, these two units would be deferred from any treatments proposed in this analysis.

Thinning would not remove any trees providing suitable nesting habitat for murrelets, but in the near term could remove adjacent trees that provide cover. In the long term, lateral crown development and the growth of larger tree limbs would provide additional nesting opportunities. As a consequence, thinning would constitute a “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” determination for habitat modification.

Daily operational restrictions would be employed for units within ¼-mile of any unsurveyed suitable habitat to reduce the potential for disturbance in association with thinning operations. These restrictions would consist of a prohibition on operations from 2 hours before sunset until 2 hours after sunrise, during the period of April 1<sup>st</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup>. As a consequence, thinning operations would constitute a “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” determination for the marbled murrelet for noise disturbance because there would be a negligible likelihood of disturbing individual birds.

In the FY 2003-2008 Programmatic Biological Opinion (Log No. 1-15-03-F-160), dated February 21, 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred with the BLM's determinations that the projects are "not likely to adversely affect" the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, for either disturbance or habitat modification.

There are no listed fish species within the immediate vicinity of any units in the Taylor Made project area because of downstream barriers to anadromous fish on the Middle Fork Coquille River. The upstream limits of access by coho salmon also mark the extent of Essential Fish Habitat.

Thinning in the Boomerang and Rice Bowl project areas was determined a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for Oregon Coast coho salmon and Oregon Coast steelhead trout. Thinning would not have an adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat. This determination is based on the conclusions that there would be no effect on streamside shading and water temperatures, or on the present availability of large wood. Some negligible amounts of sediment could be derived in association with road renovation and timber hauling. This sediment would not be sufficient to cause substrate embeddedness or increased turbidity in spawning and rearing habitat or Essential Fish Habitat located downstream of the project areas. In a letter dated June 30, 2003, the BLM received concurrence from NOAA/Fisheries.

Suitable habitat for Kincaid's lupine is absent from the Rice Bowl and Taylor Made project areas, but is present within or adjacent to four units in the Boomerang project area. These areas would be surveyed. If the lupine is located, the sites would be protected in accordance with the current management recommendations. As a consequence, the thinnings would have "No Effect" on the lupine.

Port-Orford-cedar is present in portions of the Boomerang and Taylor Made project areas. Project design features have been formulated to address potential spread of the root disease caused by *Phytophthora lateralis*.

Required protocol surveys for Survey and Manage plant and wildlife species will be conducted prior to any implementation decisions. At the time of implementation of any project proposed in the EA, documented sites would be protected in accordance with the current management recommendations.

The measures described above insure that the proposed 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.

Of the twelve points listed under 40 CFR § 1508.27(b), the following were considered and 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 South River Commercial Thinning 2002 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.

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Field Manager  
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Date