

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

Green Thunder Regeneration and Commercial Thinning Harvest

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

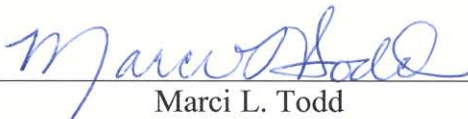
The Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District of the Bureau of Land Management has analyzed a proposal called the **Green Thunder Regeneration and Commercial Thinning Harvest**. In the proposed action, regeneration harvest of mature and old-growth timber and commercial thinning harvest and density management of young-growth timber would occur in the Little River and Middle North Umpqua Watersheds located in Sections 30, 31 and 33; T26S R2W, and Section 25, T26S R3W; W.M. The Environmental Assessment (EA), OR-104 - 99 - 04, contains a description and analysis of the proposed action. This FONSI supersedes the previous one signed on October 15, 2004. A summary of the analysis contained in the EA shows:

- 1). Approximately 340 acres were analyzed for potential harvest activity.
- 2). The project would not be expected to impact any special status plants or cultural resources (EA, page 16).
- 3). A Biological Assessment was submitted to the US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) on June 8, 2005 which cited that the removal of suitable habitat would be “likely to adversely affect” the Northern spotted owl and requested formal consultation. The actions anticipated under this analysis are covered under the *Biological Opinion for Effects to the Bald Eagle, Northern Spotted Owl, Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat, Marbled Murrelet, and Marbled Murrelet Critical Habitat by Programmatic Activities of the U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Roseburg District Office (FWS Reference Number 1-15-05-F-0512)* (Aug. 29, 2005). The Biological Opinion (pg. 101) concluded that “Adverse effects caused by the proposed action . . . are not considered significant [to spotted owls] because: (1) the Northwest Forest Plan conservation strategy considered such reductions, which the Service has concluded will not jeopardize the continued existence of spotted owl (USDA/USDI 1994; Appendix G); (2) new information on the spotted owl (Courtney et al. 2004) affirmed the validity of the habitat-based spotted owl conservation strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan; and (3) the spotted owl population on the District is stable.”
- 4). A Biological Assessment (BA) was submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries) for informal conference on July 21, 2004. The BA determined that the project “may effect, not likely to adversely affect” the Oregon Coast coho salmon which is proposed for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. In addition, the BA determined that the proposed project “would not adversely affect” Essential Fisheries Habitat (EFH) for coho and Chinook salmon.

This proposal is in conformance with the *"Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS) dated October 1994 and its associated Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resources Management Plan (RMP) dated June 2, 1995.* This proposal is located on lands within the Matrix, Riparian Reserve, and Little River Adaptive Management Area Land Use Allocations. The RMP permits ". . . timber harvest and other silvicultural activities in that portion of the matrix with suitable forest lands, according to management actions/directions . . ." (RMP, pg. 33). The RMP (pg. 25) also permits silvicultural practices within the Riparian Reserves in order to ". . . acquire desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy [ACS] objectives." This proposal would also help to provide ". . . a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products that will help maintain the stability of local and regional economies . . ." (RMP pg. 3). Two alternatives were analyzed: the "no action" and the proposed action alternative. Full and partial road decommissioning as well as road renovation and improvement would also be accomplished on certain existing roads as part of the proposed action.

Finding of No Significant Impacts:

I have reviewed this Environmental Assessment for any potentially significant environmental impacts. The tests of significance as described in 40 CFR 1508.27 (see attached) were applied. Based on the site specific analysis summarized in the EA and noted above, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action with significant impacts to the quality of the human environment therefore an Environmental Impact Statement does not need to be prepared.



Marci L. Todd
Swiftwater Field Manager



Date

Summary of Effects of the Proposed Action

Context (What?)	Intensity (How Much?)	Reason for not being Significant
<p>An immediate increase (33 - 80%) in fuel loading (slash) in the regeneration harvest units. Approximately 25% of this slash would be in the fine fuel which most influences fire rate of spread. The risk of uncontrolled fire would be elevated for three to ten years (EA pg. 23, para. 2).</p>	<p>Fuel loading increase from natural levels (15 - 25 tons/acre) (EA pg. 14, para. 2) to post-harvest levels (20 - 45 tons/acre) across 140 acres.</p>	<p>Slash-burning should consume 90% of the fine fuels and substantially reduce the risk of damage to the residual stand from wildfire. Remaining slash would decompose to background levels, within three to ten years and add nutrients to the soil.</p>
<p>Removal or modification of Northern spotted owl habitat (EA pg. 23, para. 4).</p> <p>The Biological Assessment (June 8, 2005) determined that the removal of suitable habitat would likely adversely affect the Northern spotted owl (Table 6A, pg. 35).</p>	<p>Removal of 140 acres of suitable Northern spotted owl habitat, and four acres of dispersal habitat; and modification of 205 acres of dispersal habitat and six acres of suitable Northern spotted owl habitat (EA pg. 24, para. 1).</p>	<p>The loss of suitable habitat would not affect the ability of the four existing spotted owl sites within 1.2 miles of the project area to function (EA pg. 23, para. 4). Thinned stands would continue to function as dispersal habitat, but in a slightly degraded condition. Functionality of the modified dispersal habitat would improve in 10 to 15 years (EA pg. 24, para. 1). Since there are no known spotted owls sites within 0.25 miles of the regeneration harvest units nor within 65 yards of the commercial thinning/density management unit (31A), there would be no disturbance effects to spotted owls (EA pg. 24, para. 2).</p> <p>Formal consultation with the USF&WS (Aug. 29, 2005) concluded that “. . . “Adverse effects caused by the proposed action . . . are not considered significant [to spotted owls] . . . [and] will not jeopardize the continued existence of spotted owl.”</p>

Context (What?)	Intensity (How Much?)	Reason for not being Significant
<p>Removal or modification of Bureau Sensitive and Bureau Assessment wildlife Species habitat (EA pg. 24, para. 3, 4; and pg. 25 para. 1).</p>	<p>Modification of 206 ac. of mid-seral habitat and removal of 140 ac. of late-seral habitat.</p>	<p>Thinning would promote the use of the stands by the northern goshawk, purple martin, and the Oregon vesper sparrow. Regeneration harvest would provide open habitat suitable for establishment of potential purple martin colonies and Oregon vesper sparrow sites. Green retention trees would serve as legacy structures for future recruitment as bat habitat. Snag habitat for cavity nesters would be retained. There would be no disturbance effects (e.g. nest abandonment) to the known red-tailed hawk nest adjacent to Unit 33C since activities would not occur within a quarter mile of the nest site during the nesting season (March 1st – July 15th).</p>
<p>A slight short-term (ten years) increase in the low probability of harvest-related landslides (EA pg. 25, para. 3).</p>	<p>Increase from low (less than 10 percent) to the low end of the moderate range (10 to 20 percent) for some sites in the five acres of FGR slopes in the regeneration units 25A and 33B.</p>	<p>Landslides due to new spur construction would not occur since these spurs would be located at or near ridge tops on stable slopes (EA pg. 25, para. 2). The likely size of any debris avalanche would be less than 0.2 acres (para. 3) due to incorporation of project design features (retaining trees in swale bottoms, dry season yarding with at least one-end suspension, hand waterbarring skyline yarding trails and no broadcast burning).</p>
<p>Soil compaction/displacement would result from road building and logging activities (EA pg. 25, para. 4; pg. 26, para. 1).</p>	<p>About 1.6 miles of new temporary road would be constructed. About 0.5 miles (two acres) would be considered new disturbance.</p> <p>About 0.4 acres of new permanent road would be considered an irretrievable loss to soil productivity (EA pg. 25, para. 4).</p>	<p>Temporary spurs would be subsoiled recovering up to 80 percent of lost productivity (EA pg. 25, para. 4).</p>

Context (What?)	Intensity (How Much?)	Reason for not being Significant
	<p>Compaction and soil displacement due to skyline yarding with light to moderate soil compaction covering up about two to three percent of the surface (EA pg. 26, para. 4).</p> <p>About 80 acres could be ground-based yarded. New tractor yarding compaction would be substantial enough to negatively affect the growth of adjacent trees (up to 10 percent loss) (EA pg. 26, para. 1 & 2).</p>	<p>The yarding compaction would be confined largely to the topsoil and would eventually heal satisfactorily without mitigation (EA pg. 26, para. 4).</p> <p>Subsoiling would be applied to trail segments with substantial compaction shattering up to 80 percent of the compaction and recovering most of the lost productivity in the long-term (EA pg. 26, para. 3).</p>
<p>Broadcast burning on slopes steeper than 70 percent often are intense resulting in unacceptable loss of organic matter and nutrients and in degrading the soil structure at the surface.</p>	<p>About 18 acres of Category 1 soils in Units 25A and 33B (EA pg. 16, para. 6).</p>	<p>Broadcast burning would be light in intensity and minimally reduce soil productivity because it would occur under moist, spring-like conditions. Most (94%) of the Category 1 soils would be handpiled to avoid broadcast burning and minimize the loss of soil productivity (EA pg. 26, para. 5).</p>
<p>Potential sediment delivery to streams may occur as a result of localized soil disturbance from logging, harvest-related landslides, and road work (EA pg. 26, para. 7; pg. 27).</p>	<p>Skyline yarding covering up to two to three percent of the cable yarded surface. (EA pg. 26, para. 4).</p> <p>Up to 97 acres could be ground-based yarded (EA pg. 5, Table 1).</p>	<p>Sediment input due to yarding or harvest in regeneration units would not occur due to the buffering effect of the Riparian Reserve along existing streams. An inconsequential amount of sediment may reach streams from thinned stands in Unit 31A since the no-harvest buffer would act as a filter strip. (EA pg. 26, para. 7). In-unit surface erosion due to soil disturbance would be negligible because of the high soil infiltration, the cover provided by duff, woody debris and residual vegetation, and the waterbarring of any yarding trail (skyline or tractor) that can channel water (EA pg. 26, para. 6).</p> <p>Skid trails would be subsoiled to improve infiltration and the trails that could pose sedimentation risks would be waterbarred and covered with slash (EA pg. 27, para. 1).</p>

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	<p>The likely size of any debris avalanche would be less than 0.2 acres (EA pg. 25, para. 3).</p> <p>Improvement of 12 miles of road (EA pg. 5, Table 1).</p>	<p>The probability of harvest-related landslides occurring and then reaching streams is low. If any landslides were to reach a stream, they would result in a short-term increase in sedimentation until the material is dispersed downstream with very low probability of being detectable in the stream beds more than a few hundred feet (EA pg. 27, para. 2).</p> <p>Maintenance of existing roads would be accomplished with project design criteria to reduce the input of sediment. There is potential for a small amount of sediment delivery to the streams from culvert replacement; however, the effects are minimal, short-term and would not extend to the fish-bearing streams downstream (EA pg. 27, para. 3).</p>
<p>Possible short-term (<10 years) and long-term (>10 years) increases in water yield and peak flows (EA pg. 28, para. 5 and pg. 29, para. 1).</p>	<p>Removal of overstory cover on 140 acres and partial removal of cover on 206 acres.</p>	<p>Analysis indicates that there would be no change in risk level from the pre-harvest levels. The risk of peak flows increasing from the proposed action would be low. (EA pg. 29, para. 2). Any change in water yield as a result of the proposed action would be so small as to be undetectable at the watershed level (EA pg. 34, para. 3).</p>
<p>Potential impacts to fisheries habitat (EA pg. 29, para. 3, and pg. 30).</p>	<p>Density management harvest on 36 acres (10% of the project area) (EA pg. 5, Table 1).</p> <p>Approximately 3.2 miles of the timber haul route is located within 200 feet of first or second order non-fish bearing streams (EA pg. 30, para. 2).</p>	<p>The nearest unit to fisheries habitat would be greater than one mile. The six units of regeneration harvest would retain full Riparian Reserve buffers; therefore no impacts are expected to the associated stream channels (EA pg. 29, para. 3).</p> <p>No reduction in large woody debris would occur within the regeneration units since full Riparian Reserve buffers would be retained and the no-harvest buffers within the density management portion (EA pg. 30, para. 1).</p> <p>In-stream sedimentation from road construction, maintenance of existing roads, and timber haul is not expected to be measurable in streams and would not be above existing background levels (EA pg. 30, para. 2).</p>

Test for Significant Impacts. (40 CFR 1508.27)

1. Has impacts (both beneficial and adverse) determined to be severe? Yes No
Remarks: No identified impacts are judged to be severe.
2. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety? Yes No
Remarks: Considering the remoteness of the project from local population centers, and the design criteria governing the proposal (EA, pg. 7 through 14), the likelihood of the project affecting public health and safety is remote and speculative.
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? Yes No
Remarks: Reviews (Cultural, Recreation, Wildlife, Hydrology and Fisheries) do not show that the proposed action would adversely affect any of the above characteristics ((EA, Appendix E).
4. Has highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment? Yes No
Remarks: Some public responses received during the public comment period expressed a desire for no regeneration harvest but I find that this degree of controversy does not satisfy the threshold for the preparation of an EIS.
5. Has highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involves unique or unknown environmental risks? Yes No
Remarks: The analysis does not indicate that this action would involve unique or unknown risks.
6. Establishes a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? 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 directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? Yes No
Remarks: We find that this action would not have a cumulatively significant impact on the environment beyond that already identified in the EIS.
8. Has adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? Yes No
Remarks: The EA (Appendix E) does not indicate that this action would adversely affect any sites, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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?

- Aquatic Species Yes No
- Botanical Species Yes No
- Terrestrial Species Yes No

Remarks: The Biological Assessment determined that the project is a “may effect, not likely to adversely affect” (NLAA) for the Oregon Coast coho salmon (candidate for listing under ESA). Conferencing with NOAA - fisheries concurred with BLM’s NLAA determination.

Botanical surveys did not identify the presence of any T&E plants therefore consultation was not required.

This action is covered under the *Biological Opinion for Effects to the Bald Eagle, Northern Spotted Owl, Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat, Marbled Murrelet, and Marbled Murrelet Critical Habitat by Programmatic Activities of the U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Roseburg District Office* (Aug. 29, 2005) which concluded that “. . . “Adverse effects caused by the proposed action . . . are not considered significant [to spotted owls] . . . [and] will not jeopardize the continued existence of spotted owl.”

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment? Yes No

Remarks: We find that this action would not threaten a violation of Federal, State, local or tribal law imposed for the protection of the environment.