

Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

Saddle Up To Paradise Commercial Thinning & Density Management

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
EA# OR-104-07-03

The proposed commercial thinning and density management will occur on two units (approximately 200 acres) of 33 to 64 year-old second-growth forest located in the Elk Creek/Upper Umpqua Fifth-Field Watershed in Section 27; T21S, R07W; Willamette Meridian. Within these 200 acres, approximately 10 acres will be removed for the development of spur roads.

This project is within the General Forest Management Area (89 acres), Riparian Reserve (20 acres), and unmapped Late-Successional Reserve (LSR)(81 acres) Land Use Allocations and approximately 3.184 million board feet of timber will be available to support local and regional manufacturers and economies. In addition, approximately 0.2 acres will be removed for the development of spur roads on private, industrial forest lands.

Saddle Up To Paradise will provide approximately 3,184 MBF of merchantable timber available for auction. Approximately 1,679 MBF is within GFMA, 320 MBF is within Riparian Reserves, and 1,185 MBF is within the unmapped Late-Successional Reserve.

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: After commercial thinning and density management, the down woody debris will increase from 11 to 15 tons per acre as depicted in the photo 2-DF-3-PC from *Photo Series for Quantifying Forest Residues in the Coastal Douglas-Fir – Hemlock Type* (Maxwell and Ward, 1976) (EA, pg. 30). A total of approximately six acres of slash piles will be burned at logging landings (EA, pg. 30).

Machine generated piles at landings will be burned to reduce concentrated fuel loads. Remaining fuels generated will be predominately small, less than three inches in diameter, and will be scattered over the harvest area. The additional amount down woody debris (i.e. four tons per acre) will not dramatically increase the fire risk to the area (EA, pg. 30).

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: A letter was sent (March 19, 2007) to three adjacent landowners. No comments were received (EA, pg. 53).

During the thirty day public review period for the Saddle Up To Paradise EA (which ended on August 2, 2007), comments were received from four organizations. Upon reviewing the comments received, those that were specific to the Saddle Up To Paradise 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, pgs. 16, 63-65).

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 will 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. 28-30), fire and fuels management (pgs. 30), hydrology (pgs. 34), soils (pg. 42), fish populations and habitat (pg. 45) were analyzed in the Saddle Up To Paradise 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. 15, 53). No cultural resources were discovered (EA, pg. 15). It has been determined that there will be no effect to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, pg. 53).

9. May adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) 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 proposed action will have no effect on listed botanical species (EA, pg. 51, 84).

There are currently no listed, or proposed for listing, fish species in the Roseburg District (EA, pgs. 42-43, 53). The nearest Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Coho salmon or Chinook salmon is located approximately 0.1 miles downslope of the project (EA, pg. 45). However, the proposed project will not adversely affect EFH in Hancock Creek, Elk Creek, or their tributaries (EA, pgs. 45, 53). Therefore, there are no further consultation obligations with the National Marine Fisheries

Service (EA, pg. 53).

On July 13, 2007, U.S. Magistrate Judge Stewart made findings and recommendations in Trout Unlimited v. Lohn (CV-06-1493-ST) that the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) determination not to list the Oregon Coast coho salmon is arbitrary, capricious, contrary to the best available science and that NMFS should be ordered to issue a new final listing rule consistent with the ESA (Decision Document, pg. 3). However, the current status of listing for the Oregon Coast coho under the ESA remains unchanged from the analysis that was conducted in the Saddle Up To Paradise EA (pgs. 42-43).

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. 53).

A Letter of Concurrence was received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (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 occupied site within Zone 1 (pgs.8-11, Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0511).

Project design features (EA, pgs. 9-15) 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 insure that Saddle Up To Paradise 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 Saddle Up To Paradise 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.

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Date