

Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

Whatagas Regeneration Harvest

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
EA# OR-104-06-08

Whatagas is a regeneration harvest that will occur on nine scattered units (approximately 115 acres) of mature and old-growth forest located in the Calapooya Creek Fifth-Field Watershed in Sections 7, and 19; T25S R3W, and Section 13; T25S R4W; W.M. Approximately three additional acres will be removed (2.3 acres on BLM administered lands and 1.0 acre on private industrial timber lands) for the development of temporary spur roads for a total of 118 acres of harvest. This project is within Connectivity/Diversity Block and General Forest Management Area Land Use Allocations and is designed to help meet the Roseburg District's annual allowable sale quantity of 45 million board feet declared in the Roseburg District *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP, p. 8).

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: The increase in fuel loadings (from 27 to 53 tons per acre) and fire risk immediately following regeneration harvest will be mitigated by prescribed fire treatments (EA, pgs. 16, 38). Prescribed fire treatments will reduce the overall fuel loadings (from 57 to 43 tons per acre) and will consume most of the small (< 1 inch) diameter fuels. The increase in fire risk from regeneration harvest is mitigated by reducing the amount of small fuels, which are necessary to ignite the larger fuels, and by reducing the probability of roadside ignition (EA, pg. 38).

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: Comments were received from four organizations (filed jointly) in opposition and from one organization and one individual in support of the Whatagas project and were considered in the preparation of the Decision for this project (Whatagas Decision, pgs. 11-12). However, no comments were received that I consider 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 were analyzed and found not to be highly uncertain or unique (Decision, pgs. 5-11).

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 does 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 were analyzed and found not to be significant (Whatagas Decision, pgs. 5-11).

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. No cultural or historical resources are known to be present (Whatagas Decision, pg. 5). There will be no impacts to scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

No Native American religious concerns or values were identified in association with the project area, so there will be no effect on potential Native American Religious Concerns.

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 (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 plants; therefore this action has no effect on listed botanical species (Whatagas Decision, pg. 5).

The Oregon Coast coho in Roseburg District does not warrant listing under the ESA at this time (Fed. Reg., Vol. 71 No. 12, Jan. 19, 2006). There is no Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Coho salmon or Chinook salmon within or adjacent to the harvest units. The project will not adversely affect EFH; therefore consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service is not required (Whatagas Decision, pg. 16).

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. The Biological Opinion (BO) for the re-initiation of consultation on Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management FY 2005-2008 Management Activities (Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0512) was completed August 29, 2005 (EA, pg. 61).

The BO (pg. 101) rendered by the USFWS 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 the 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.” (EA, pg. 61). PDFs (EA, pgs. 11-13) will be implemented in compliance with the BO (Whatagas Decision, pgs. 7-8).

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 Whatagas Regeneration Harvest are 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 Whatagas Regeneration Harvest 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 effects of the silvicultural treatment are within those anticipated and already analyzed in the *Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS, 1994) and 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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Date