

# WARD CREEK DENSITY MANAGEMENT and COMMERCIAL THINNING HARVEST SWIFTWATER RESOURCE AREA

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) REVISED

The Swiftwater Resource Area, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management, has analyzed a proposal called the **WARD CREEK DENSITY MANAGEMENT and COMMERCIAL THINNING HARVEST**. In the proposed action, commercial thinning harvest of young growth timber would occur in the Elk Creek and Siuslaw Watersheds located in Sections 5, 7 and 17; T21S R4W, W.M. This proposal is in conformance with the "*Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resources Management Plan*" (RMP), the "*Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*" (Feb. 1994) and the Record of Decision (ROD) for that plan dated April 13, 1994. This proposal is located on lands within the "Matrix" and "Riparian Reserve" Land Use Allocations. The ROD permits "timber harvest and other silvicultural activities ... in that portion of the matrix with suitable forest lands, according to standards and guidelines [S&G]" (S&G, pg. C-39 ). The S&G's (pg. C-32) also permit "... silvicultural practices for Riparian Reserves to control stocking, reestablish and manage stands, and acquire desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives." This proposal would 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" alternatives. The Environmental Assessment (EA), #OR-104-98-27, contains a description and analysis of the proposed action.

A summary of the analysis contained in the EA shows:

- 1). Approximately 200 acres were analyzed for potential harvest activity (pg. 2). Activities will occur on 182 ac.
- 2). The project area does not occur within Late Successional Reserves (pg. 2) or in a Key Watershed (pg. 6). This project would enter Riparian Reserves to meet the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (pg. 6).
- 3). The project would not be expected to impact any special status plants (Supplemental Botany Report, April 16, 2004) or cultural resources (EA, Appendix E).
- 4). Formal consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service has been completed and a Biological Opinion has been received (*Formal and Informal Consultation on fiscal year (FY) 96 and partial FY 97 Forest Management Activities and FY 96 through FY 98 programmatic projects (March 25, 1996)*). The Biological Opinion (pg. 42) concluded that the action is "... not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, spotted owl or murrelet or adversely modify designated critical habitat for spotted owls and murrelets." *The Five-Year Status Review for the Northern Spotted Owl* (USFWS 2004) was released in November 2004. The final determination of the review was to keep the status of the northern spotted owl as 'threatened'.
- 5). Since the OC coho salmon is no longer listed, ESA consultation and a Biological Opinion are not required. The coho has been proposed for listing as "threatened" by NOAA-fisheries therefore conferencing was requested. Conferencing with NOAA-Fisheries (October 28, 2004) concurred with BLM's determination that the proposed project is NLAA (Not Likely to Adversely Affect) for the coho.

Finding of No Significant Impacts: I have reviewed the tests of significance as described in 40 CFR 1508.27 (see attached). Based on the site specific analysis summarized in the EA and noted above, it is my determination that none of the alternatives considered constitute a major federal action with significant impacts to the quality of the human environment and an Environmental Impact Statement does not need to be prepared.

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Marci L. Todd, Field Manager  
Swiftwater Field Office

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Date

### Summary of Effects of the Proposed Action

Context (What?)	Intensity (How Much?)	Reason for not being Significant
Potential increase in noxious weeds and invasive non-native plants. (EA pg. 10, para. 5).	Disturbance on 535 ft. (<sup>1</sup>/2 ac.) of new temporary road construction (EA pg. 5, para. 2).	Equipment cleaning (EA pg. 7, item #6) and seeding and mulching bare soil with weed-free seed (EA pg. 6, item #2a(2)) would reduce the potential for invasion.
Soil erosion and sedimentation (EA pg. 11, para. 3).	Greater than current levels (EA pg. 11, para. 3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintaining or improving existing roads to fix drainage and erosion problems.</li> <li>2. No over-wintering of bare erodible subgrade.</li> <li>3. Restricting road renovation and log hauling on unsurfaced roads to the dry season.</li> </ol> <p>“level should not be significant given proper implementation of the PDF’s. Erosion and sedimentation levels . . . should quickly drop to pre-harvest levels.” (EA pg. 11, para. 3).</p>
Tractor yarding could add to the existing compaction (EA pg. 11, para. 4).	Three percent soil productivity loss (EA pg. 11, para. 4).	“subsoiling . . . would reduce the soil productivity loss . . . to about 0.6 percent.” (EA pg. 11, para. 4).
Possible destabilization of some slopes (EA pg. 11, para. 5).	“The risks of landslides would be slightly elevated over the no action alternative” (EA pg. 11, para. 5).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reservation of unstable areas (Unit 5A, 7C and 17A).</li> <li>2. One end suspension and dry season operation.</li> </ol>

(EA Appendix D pg. 2).

**WARD CREEK**

**Test for significant impacts. (516 DM 2 Appendix 2)**

1. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety?  Yes  No  
**Remarks:** Considering the remoteness of the project in relation to local population centers, and the mitigation measures governing the proposal, the likelihood of the project affecting the public's health and safety is indirect, remote and speculative.
2. 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:** The Cultural Report, Recreation Report, Wildlife Report, Hydrologist's Report and Fisheries Report, located in Appendix F of the EA, provide sufficient information to determine that the proposed action would not affect the above characteristics.
3. Has highly controversial effects?  Yes  No  
**Remarks:** No controversial effects were noted as a result of environmental analysis or public review.
4. Has highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involves unique or unknown environmental risks?  Yes  No  
**Remarks:** The analysis and mitigation measures that would be applied do not indicate that this action would involve unique or unknown risks.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Has adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?  Yes  No  
**Remarks:** The Cultural Report located in Appendix F of the EA indicates this action would not adversely affect any sites, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
8. Has adverse effects on species listed or proposed for listing on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?
- |                     |                              |  |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Aquatic Species     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Botanical Species   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Terrestrial Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

**Remarks:** This is based on (1) an October 28, 2004 conference report from NOAA Fisheries which

concluded with the project determination of “may effect, not likely to adversely affect” Oregon Coast coho salmon (proposed for listing) and Oregon Coast Steelhead trout (candidate), (2) botanical surveys indicating no presence of T&E plants; and (3) formal consultation with the USF&WS completed on June 16, 1997 which did not result in a "jeopardy" call for terrestrial species.

9. Requires compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplains Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

Yes  No

**Remarks:** Area is not within a floodplain.

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Yes  No

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