

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, and DECISION RECORD¹

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Number: OR-080-05-10

BLM Office: Marys Peak Resource Area, Salem District Office
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, Oregon 97306

Proposed Action Title: Plum Creek, Devils Well Road Project

Type of Project: Use of 0.43 mile of BLM road #11-10-12 (0.39 mile of which are located on Plum Creek Timber Company land) and construction of approximately 400 feet of new road across BLM land.

Location of Proposed Action: Township 11 South, Range 10 West, Section 12 NW¼ of SW¼, Willamette Meridian located approximately 9 miles east of the Newport, Oregon. The BLM lands are Public Domain, with the Land Use Allocation of General Forest Management (GFMA).

Conformance with Land Use Plans, Policies, and Programs: The Plum Creek, Devils Well Road Project has been designed to conform to the following documents, which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District: **1/ Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan**, May 1995 (RMP): The RMP has been reviewed and it has been determined that the Plum Creek, Devils Well Road Project conforms to the land use plan terms and conditions (e.g. complies with management goals, objectives, direction, standards and guidelines) as required by 43 CFR 1610.5 (BLM Handbook H1790-1), **2/ Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl**, April 1994 (the Northwest Forest Plan, or NWFP); **3/ Record of Decision to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl**, March 2004

¹ Pursuant to BLM Handbook 1790-1, Rel. 1-1547, 10/25/88, page IV-11, it is appropriate to use this format when all the following conditions are met: 1/ Only a few elements of the human environment are affected by the proposed action; 2/ Only a few simple and straightforward mitigation measures, if any, are needed to avoid or reduce impacts; 3/ There are no program-specific documentation requirements associated with the action under consideration; 4/ The proposed action does not involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources and, therefore, alternatives do not need to be considered; 5/ The environmental assessment is not likely to generate wide public interest and is not being distributed for public review and comment; and 6/ The proposed action is located in an area covered by an existing land use plan and conforms with that plan.

(SSSP); *4/ Record of Decision Amending Resource Management Plans for Seven Bureau of Land Management Districts and Land and Resource Management Plans for Nineteen National Forests within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, March 2004 (ACSRD).*

Purpose of and Need for Action: The applicant, Plum Creek Timber Company, has requested permanent access to their lands by amendment to R.W.A. S-347 (OR44513). Use of an existing BLM road #11-10-12 and construction of approximately 400-feet of ridge top road on BLM land would be necessary to access and manage Plum Creek Timber Company lands. Prior to using the existing road located upon BLM land, and in order to construct the proposed new road upon BLM land, the affected property would need to be added to the existing R.W.A. S-347. The allocated part of the section to be added would be limited to the E¹/₂E¹/₂NE¹/₄NW¹/₄SW¹/₄ of Section 12, Township 11 South., Range 10 West., Willamette Meridian to assure that no future Plum Creek Timber Company development would occur without BLM analysis and approval. In the proposed action, BLM would allow the construction of the ridge top road to avoid the potential detrimental consequences of Plum Creek Timber Companies alternative route (construction on mid-sloped, full bench ground).

Description of the Proposed Action: The applicant proposes to construct an approximate 400-foot road across BLM land, atop a ridgeline and through a thirteen year old stand of conifer reproduction. The clearing width would be 30-feet or less on gentle terrain, involving approximately 0.28 acre. No merchantable BLM trees would be cut under the proposed action.

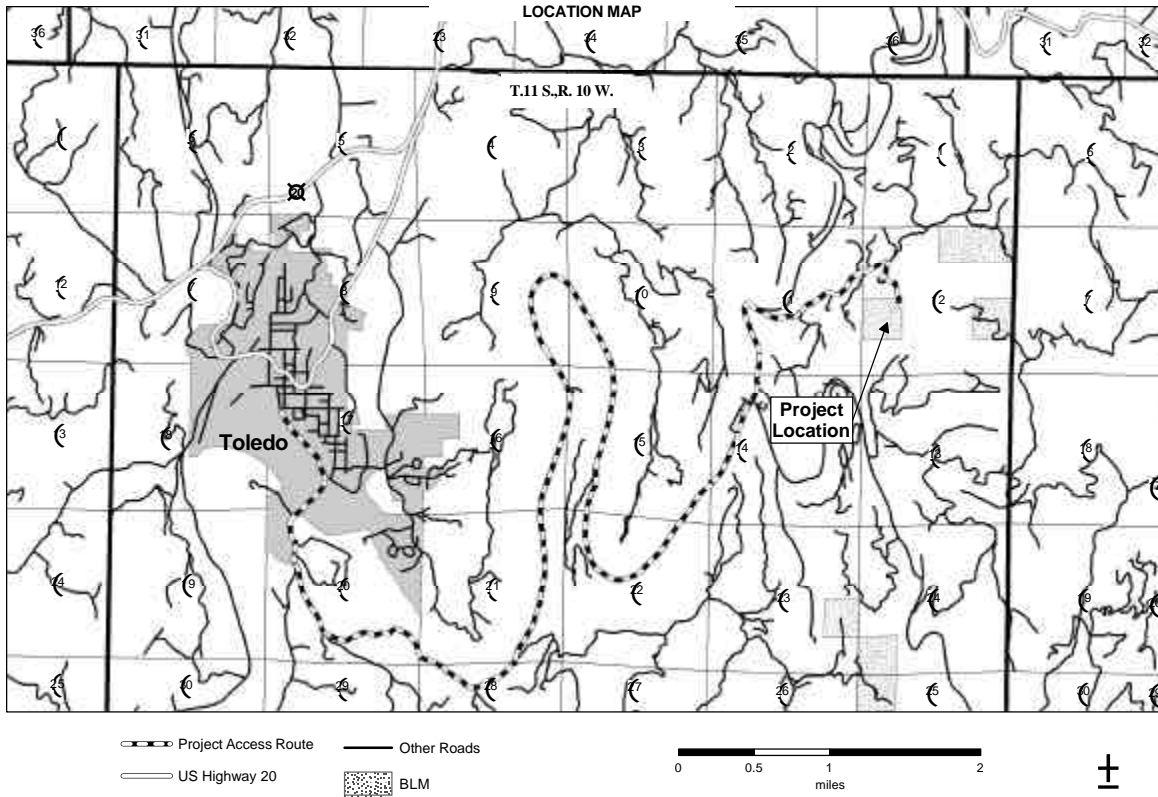
The newly constructed road would not be rocked, therefore construction and haul would occur during the dryer months, typically June through October. Following completion of log haul, the applicant would be required to construct draindips, seed all disturbed areas, and block the approach to the dirt road.

Timber harvest on Plum Creek Timber Company land would predominantly consist of red alder and bigleaf maple, with scattered conifer trees. Following operations, the harvest units would be planted with a variety of conifer species.

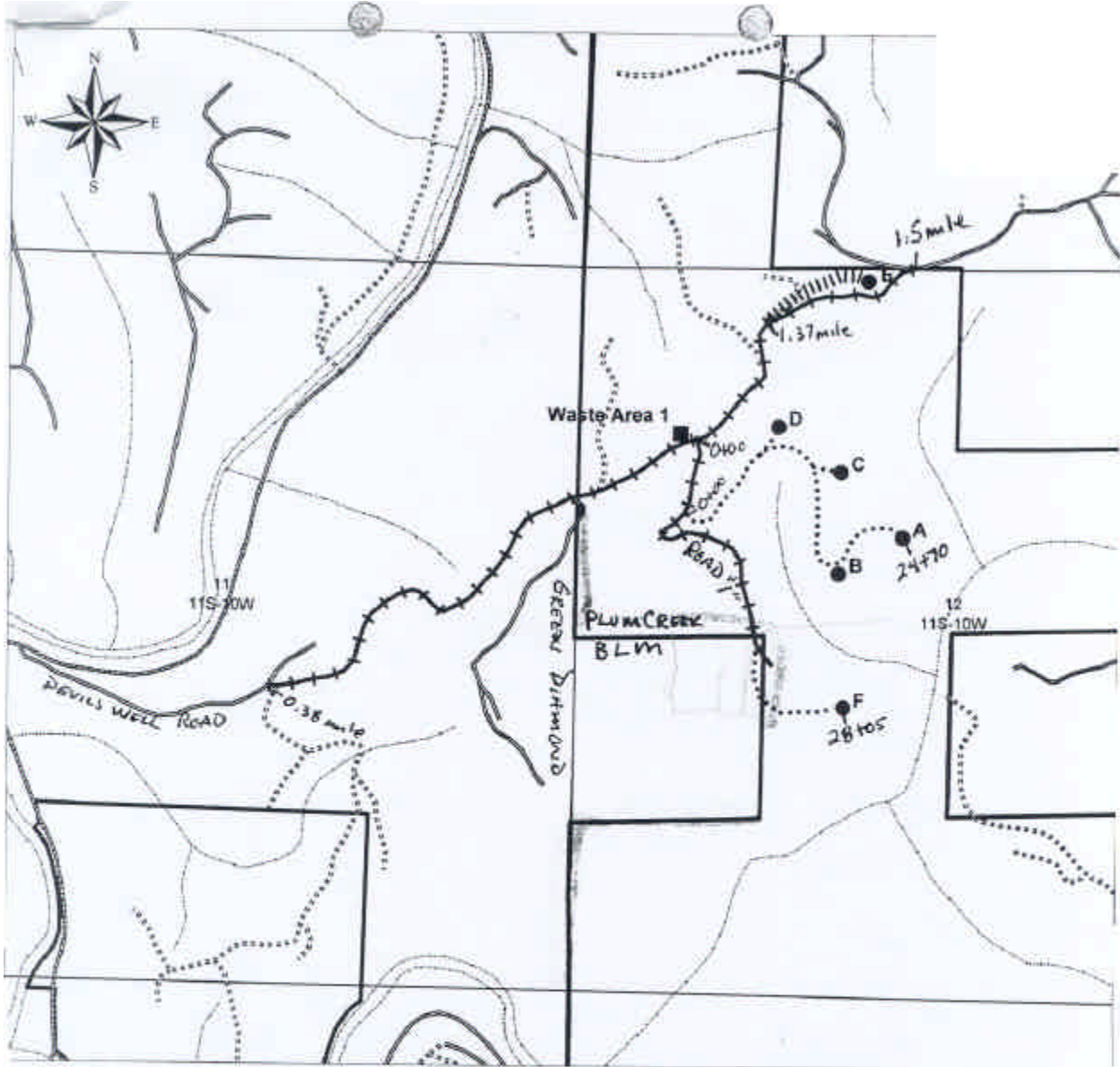
Map 1: Vicinity Map

May 24, 2005

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON
Plum Creek Devil's Well Road Project



Map 2: Map of the Proposed Action



Devils Well Road Project (#0388) HB 305

Sections 11 and 12, T11S, R10W, W. M.

Lincoln County

PROJECT MAP

Scale: 1" = 1000'

Exhibit A

- Waste Area
- New Construct Road
- Landing New
- |||| Road Reconstruct
- +— Road Betterment
- == Gravel Road
- Dirt Road
- Paved Road
- Legals
- Plum Creek Ownership

Consultation and Public Involvement:

ESA consultation:

- **Wildlife:** The proposed action on BLM lands results in a no effect to northern spotted owls, bald eagles and marbled murrelets. However associated timber harvesting activities on Plum Creek Timber Company lands would likely occur within ¼ mile of two active marbled murrelet nesting sites located on separate BLM parcels. If the decision is made to approve the proposed action, the BLM would inform Plum Creek Timber Company that they may want to discuss potential impacts to listed species with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Fish:** A determination has been made that this proposed project would have ‘no effect’ on Coastal Coho Salmon. The upstream limit of Coastal Coho Salmon distribution is approximately ¼ to 1 mile below the project area in Devils Well and Elk Creek. The project would have no effect on listed fish due to it's location atop the ridge, well above stream initiation points. Because the road would not be aggregate surfaced, timber hauling would be limited to the dryer summer months.

Public Involvement: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the EA, FONSI and Decision Record will be made available for public review June 8, 2005 to June 22, 2005. The notice for public comment will be published in the *Newport News-Times* newspaper beginning on June 8, 2005 and the EA, FONSI and Decision Record will be posted on the Internet under Environmental Assessments at <http://www.or.blm.gov/salem/html/planning/index.htm>.

Affected Environment:

The proposed action would occur within a 13 year old plantation located on BLM lands. The road construction would be located at an elevation of no more than 30-feet from the ridge top, well above any stream initiation points.

BLM lands in the proximity of the proposed action are designated as General Forest Management Area (GFMA) Land Use Allocation (LUA). The Plum Creek Timber Company land scheduled for harvest consists predominantly of a red alder/bigleaf maple component with scattered conifer, lacking the traits usually associated with nesting habitat for marbled murrelets and spotted owls.

As high up the ridge as the Plum Creek Timber Company road would be located, there would be little risk of associated mass earth movement.

Environmental Effects:

The interdisciplinary team reviewed the elements of the environment, required by law, regulation, Executive Order and policy, to determine if they would be affected by the proposed action. *Table 1* (Critical Elements of the Environment from BLM H-1790-1, Appendix 5) and *Table 2* (Other Elements of the Environment) and *Table 3* (Aquatic Conservation Strategy

Summary) summarize the results of that review. Affected elements are **bold**. Unless otherwise noted, the effects apply to the proposed action; and the No Action Alternative is not expected to have adverse effects to these elements.

Table 1: Environmental Review for the Critical Elements of the Environment (BLM H-1790-1, Appendix 5)

Critical Elements Of The Environment		Status: (i.e., Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected)	Does this project contribute to cumulative effects? Yes/No	Remarks
Air Quality (Clean Air Act)		Affected	No	The proposal may involve actions which affect air quality. If slash hauled from BLM land to Plum Creek Timber Company land is burned rather than buried some localized short term impacts to air quality may occur. All burning would be done in compliance with Oregon DEQ Smoke Management Guidelines resulting in minor or no negative impacts to the local air quality.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern		Not Present	No	
Cultural, Historic, Palentological		Not Affected	No	No pre-project survey is required as outlined in the <i>Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Land Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Oregon; Appendix D - "Coast Range Inventory Plan (August 1998)</i>
Energy (Executive Order 13212)		Not Affected	No	There is no known energy resources located in the project area. The proposed action would have no effect on energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.
Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898)		Not Affected	No	The proposed action is not anticipated to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.
Prime or Unique Farm Lands		Not Present	No	
Flood Plains (Executive Order 11988)		Not Affected	No	The project is small in scale and would not change the character of the river floodplain, change floodplain elevations, or affect overbank flooding.
Hazardous or Solid Wastes		Not Present	No	
Invasive, Nonnative Species (Executive Order 13112)		Affected	No	Any exposed mineral soil would create habitat for non-native species. Sowing the exposed mineral soil with grass seed would reduce the likelihood of any infestation(s) of Oregon listed noxious weeds.
Native American Religious Concerns		Not Affected	No	None known.
Threatened or Endangered (T/E) Species or Habitat	Fish	Not Affected	No	Construction and hauling activities on BLM lands during the dry months and above stream initiation points. Alternative routes to private lands that do not cross BLM administered lands are feasible, though less stable and significantly higher impacts to the affected lands.

Table 1: Environmental Review for the Critical Elements of the Environment (BLM H-1790-1, Appendix 5)

<i>Critical Elements Of The Environment</i>		<i>Status: (i.e., Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected)</i>	<i>Does this project contribute to cumulative effects? Yes/No</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
	Plants	Not Affected	No	There are no known sites of any T&E species within the project area. Nor is the project area within any likely habitat for these species.
	Wildlife (including designated Critical Habitat)	Not Affected	No	No suitable nesting habitat currently exists on BLM land in the proximity of the proposed action for Threatened or Endangered species.
Water Quality (Surface and Ground)		Not Affected	No	The project area is in the vicinity of tributaries to Devils Well Creek, which drains into Big Elk Creek. Big Elk Creek is ODEQ 303d listed for exceeding state water temperature and sediment standards and is identified in the 319 Report for moderate water quality conditions affecting fish and aquatic habitat. However, the proposed action would occur near ridgetop, away from surface water lakes or streams. Therefore, streamside shading or water temperatures would not be affected. The potential for sediment delivery to vicinity streams would be low, due to the small area of disturbance and the ability of existing vegetation & duff to filter sediment before it can reach streams. Other water quality parameters are also unlikely to be affected by the proposed action.
Wetlands (Executive Order 11990)		Not Affected	No	The proposed action would not impact wetlands or riparian zones located on BLM lands.
Wild and Scenic Rivers		Not Present	No	
Wilderness		Not Present	No	

Table 2: Environmental Review for the Other Elements of the Environment (Required by law, regulation, policy or management direction)

<i>Other Elements Of The Environment</i>	<i>Status: (i.e., Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected)</i>	<i>Does this project contribute to cumulative effects? Yes/No</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Coastal Zone (Oregon Coastal Management Program)	Not Affected	No	The proposed action is located within the coastal zone as defined by the Oregon Coastal Management Program. This proposal is consistent with the objectives of the program, and the State planning goals which form the foundation for compliance with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Act. Management actions/directions found in the RMP were determined to be consistent with the Oregon Coastal Management Program.
Fire Hazard/Risk	Affected	No	Clearing of the right-of-way would create slash that would increase the risk of a fire. The risk would be mitigated when the slash is hauled onto private land and burned or buried. Disposal in the adjacent BLM plantation is not advised as this practice would result in damage to reserve trees and an increase in the risk of a fire start in the areas where fuels are concentrated.
Land Uses (right-of-ways, permits, etc)	Not Present	No	
Late successional/old growth habitat	Not Affected	No	No mature timber would be affected by this action.
Mineral Resources	Not Present	No	
Recreation	Not Affected	No	There are no established recreational sites or uses that would be impacted as a result of the proposed action.
Rural Interface Areas	Not Present	No	

Table 2: Environmental Review for the Other Elements of the Environment (Required by law, regulation, policy or management direction)

Other Elements Of The Environment	Status: (i.e., Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected)	Does this project contribute to cumulative effects? Yes/No	Remarks	
Soils	Affected	No	<p>Under the proposed action, construction of the approximate 400-foot road would occur on, or near, the ridge top. Disturbance would be confined to a narrow strip of land. Soil disturbance: removal of top soil and compaction of the running surface should be confined to a strip approximately 12 feet in width (~0.16 ac.). Clearing of vegetation may be as wide as 30 feet. Implementation of Best Management Practices would help to minimize impacts.</p> <p>Road construction would be restricted to periods of dry weather, primarily between June 1 and October 31 of a given year in order to limit surface runoff and associated erosion. The road surface width would be limited to no more than 12 feet and would be out sloped, with no ditch. If heavy rain develops during hauling periods, road use would be postponed until conditions improve. The road would be winterized with waterbars and sown with grass seed upon completion of haul. Blocking access to the natural surfaced roadbed during periods of non-use would be required.</p>	
Special Areas outside ACECs (Within or Adjacent) (RMP pp. 33-35)	Not Present	No		
Other Special Status Species/Habitat	Fish	Not Affected	No	Construction and hauling activities on BLM lands would occur during the dry months and would be located above stream initiation points.
	Plants	Not Affected	No	There are no known sites of any bureau special status species nor is there any likely habitat within the proposed project area.
	Wildlife	Not Affected	No	No special status wildlife would be affected.
Visual Resources	Not Affected	No	Project area is located in VRM IV class.	

Table 2: Environmental Review for the Other Elements of the Environment (Required by law, regulation, policy or management direction)

<i>Other Elements Of The Environment</i>	<i>Status: (i.e., Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected)</i>	<i>Does this project contribute to cumulative effects? Yes/No</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Water Resources (except Water Quality)	Not Affected	No	The proposed action would not affect basin hydrology including stream flow or channel function because it would occur away from surface water, be small in area, and not likely to intercept near-surface or groundwater flow. Beneficial uses of project area streams include: anadromous fish, resident fish, recreation and aesthetic value. There is a domestic/non-commercial water right on Big Elk Creek approximately 1 mile downstream from the project area and a surface water right along Big Elk Creek to support aquatic life and recreation. BMPs would be implemented to minimize any potential effect to beneficial uses of water resources.
Wildlife Structural or Habitat Components – Other (Snags /CWD/Special Habitats, road densities)	Not Affected	No	The proposed action would not affect the structural or habitat components of the area because the proposed road route remains within a 13-year old reforested unit. The road density would be increased, however its' use would be limited to only harvest activities -- short term entries separated by approximate 30-year durations of non-use.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy Review: Table 3 shows the project's effect on the 4 components of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (1/ Riparian Reserves, 2/ Key Watersheds, 3/ Watershed Analysis and 4/ Watershed Restoration).

Table 3: Aquatic Conservation Strategy Review Summary (RMP pages 5-7)

<i>Components</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Remarks /References</i>
Riparian Reserves	None	The proposed action would take place outside the Riparian Reserve land use allocation.
Key Watershed	None	Not in a key watershed
Watershed Analysis	None	<i>Mid-Coast Watershed Analysis, 2001</i> ; Big Elk Creek Integrated Analysis, USFS 1993.
Watershed Restoration	None	Although the proposed action is not a component of the resource area's watershed restoration program, it would not have an adverse effect on restoration efforts.

Interdisciplinary Team:

Affected Resource	Specialist	Initial	Date
Botany/Vegetation	Ron Exeter	RRE	5unc3, 2005
Cultural Resources	Tom Vanderhoof	TMV	6/2/05
Fire Hazard/Risk	Tom Tomczyk	TST	6/2/05
Fisheries	Scott Snedaker	SS	6/3/05
Hydrology/Water Quality/Soils	Ashley La Forge	ALF	6/2/05
NEPA	Gary Humbard	GLH	6/2/05
Recreation, Visual and Rural Interface Resources	Traci Meredith	Tmm	6/2/05
Wildlife	Scott Hopkins	SH	6/2/05

EA Prepared By: STEVE CYRUS

Date: 6/1/05

EA Reviewed By: Gary J. Humbard
NEPA

Date: 6/2/05

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT and DECISION RECORD

Based upon review of the Plum Creek, Devils Well Road Project EA and supporting documents, I have determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action and would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No site specific environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, supplemental or additional information to the analysis done in the RMP/FEIS through a new environmental impact statement is not needed. It is my decision to implement the proposed action, as described in the EA.

Protests: In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this road project will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Road Project is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". For this project, the Notice of Road Project will be published in the *Newport News-Times* newspaper. Protests of this road project must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. This is planned for June 8, 2005.

Implementation Date: If no protests are filed, this decision will become effective and be implemented 15 days after the public notice of this Decision Record appears in the *Newport News-Times* newspaper.

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this decision or the protest process, contact Steve Cyrus at (503) 315-5988, Marys Peak Resource Area, Salem District, 1717 Fabry Road, Salem, Oregon 97306.

Authorized Official:  Date: June 8, 2005
 Brad Keller, Field Manager
Marys Peak Resource Area