

FINAL DECISION RECORD
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
Powerline Dairy Timber Sale
Environmental Assessment Number OR-086-99-03

USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
Salem District
Tillamook Resource Area
Columbia County, Oregon

BACKGROUND

An Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) was formulated to analyze a proposal to conduct a timber sale project on federal land located within section 33 of Township 4 North, Range 3 West, Willamette Meridian on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In response to this action an environmental analysis was conducted and documented in Environmental Assessment (EA) Number OR-086-99-03, dated March 10, 2000. Appendix 9 contains the public comments received to the EA and the BLM responses to those comments.

The proposed action is a silvicultural project utilizing commercial thinning and regeneration harvest techniques on a total of 72 acres of Matrix and 16 acres of Riparian Reserve land use allocations. The project, consisting of three treatment units, is located within the Dairy Creek watershed approximately 9 miles west of Scappoose Oregon and approximately 16 miles northwest of Portland Oregon in Columbia County, on land managed by the Tillamook Resource Area of the Salem District BLM. This project, which is referred to as the "Powerline Dairy Timber Sale", could commence as early as spring 2007.

Activities associated with this project include the commercial harvest of timber on 88 acres using cable and ground-based yarding systems; use of the Scappoose-Vernonia Highway, Gunner's Lake Mainline Road and the Pisgah Home Road as haul routes; construction of approximately 4320 feet of temporary road; reconstruction of approximately 1550 feet of temporary road; decommission approximately 5870 feet of temporary road; and conduct post-harvest site preparation and planting.

The EA is available for public review at the Tillamook Resource Area Office, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., with the exception of being closed on federal holidays. The EA is also posted on the BLM website which is located at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/salem.htm>.

The decision to be made by the Tillamook Field Manager is whether or not to prepare an environmental impact statement, and whether to approve the Powerline Dairy project as proposed, not at all, or to some other extent.

DECISION

Based on site-specific analysis, the supporting project record, and the management direction contained in the Dairy-McKay Watershed Analysis, dated March 1999, and the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP)*, dated May 1995, I have decided to implement Alternative 2, the Proposed Action as presented in chapter 2.3.2 in EA OR-086-99-03, with 3 minor modifications. These modifications are minor and do not change the scope of the timber sale analyzed, nor do the modifications affect the adequacy of the analysis contained in the EA. Hereafter, Alternative 2 is referred to as the “selected alternative”

Modification:

1. The regeneration harvest unit (unit 33-1) will be changed from year-around logging to dry-season only logging (June 1 through Sept. 30). With this change, log hauling will be restricted to the dry season for the entire timber sale, which will reduce sediment input to streams along the haul routes and associated effects on water quality and fisheries.
2. The two “legacy” roads identified to be decommissioned will be dropped from the project. Decommissioning of these roads will require removal of a number of trees that are growing along the edges of the roads, and the beneficial effects of leaving those trees in place will to a large degree offset the benefits of decommissioning those roads. There is also a log culvert in one of the roads that is slowly failing and will be removed if the road were decommissioned. The culvert is mostly logs with a very small amount of rock and dirt on top, and the stream at that point is intermittent (no water during the driest part of the year). The impacts to water quality and fisheries from the culvert failing completely will be minor.
3. Approximately 1,340 feet of road will be changed from permanent to temporary road and decommissioned after the sale. This road, which accesses unit 33-3 (commercial thinning unit) does not need to be a permanent road because of the change to dry-season only logging.

The selected alternative consists of the following design features:

Design features common to both regeneration harvest and commercial thinning treatments:

1. Ground-based yarding areas (slopes less than 35%): Ground based yarding is currently proposed for approximately 35 acres (39% of the sale area). Ground based operations will be conducted in such a manner as to assure that associated impacts will not exceed those allowed under the Best Management Practices identified in the Salem ROD/RMP (Appendix C-2).
 - * Skid trails and ground-based yarding equipment will generally be prohibited within Riparian Reserves. Exceptions will be the use of winch cable, where logging equipment is able to be operated from an existing road or where it is necessary to access the ground-based yarding area in the southwest corner of unit 33-3.
 - * Utilize existing skid trails to the greatest extent possible.
 - * Space new skid trails a minimum of approximately 150 feet apart and generally limit their width to less than 14 feet.
 - * Crawler tractors will be restricted to designated skid trails. If a track-mounted shovel loader

is used for yarding, it will be restricted to designated skid trails except in instances where logs can not be reached from skid trails.

- * Track-mounted shovel loaders used for yarding will not exceed a ground pressure rating of 6 p.s.i..
- * Log lengths will be limited to 40 feet plus trim to reduce damage to the reserved trees during yarding operations.
- * Restrict ground-based yarding to periods of low soil moisture (generally from June 15 through October 15).
- * If the purchaser chooses, proposed ground-based yarding areas may be cable yarded provided that the measures discussed within the cable section below (2.3.2.1.2) are met.
- * If the Purchaser chooses, proposed ground-based yarding areas may be cut and yarded by a harvester/forwarder type equipment provided that the following measures are met:
 - a. Except for manually felled trees which exceed the harvester capability, timber shall be felled, limbed, bucked, and bunched by a self-propelled, mechanical, track-mounted or rubber-tired harvester with a minimum boom reach of 27 feet using a single grip harvesting head. The harvester shall have a ground pressure rating of 6 psi (pounds per square inch) or less.
 - b. The forwarder shall be all-wheel-drive, capable of self-loading and unloading, and have rear tires or track type devices greater than 18 inches in overall width. Log forwarders with GVWs (Gross Vehicle Weight) greater than 15,000 pounds shall have a minimum of three load-bearing axles.
 - c. The location of the harvester trails shall be marked on the ground with flagging by the Purchaser and approved in writing by the Authorized Officer prior to felling and forwarding operations.
 - d. Forwarding operations will be restricted to trails approved by the Authorized Officer. Forwarding trails will not exceed an average of 15 feet in total width, and will not be closer than 100 feet, center to center, where parallel trails are used.
 - e. To minimize soil compaction and displacement, equipment shall be confined to existing skid trails and main roads as much as possible, the number of forwarder passes minimized, and the created slash from limbing and bucking shall be placed onto the skid trails for the harvester and forwarder to walk on.
 - f. Yarding shall be done with equipment capable of lifting and carrying logs fully suspended off the ground.
 - g. Log landings and transfer points shall be limited to existing roads and turnouts, unless otherwise agreed to by the Authorized Officer.
 - h. Harvester roads shall not exceed an average of 15 feet in width, nor be spaced less than 50 feet apart (from center to center).

2. Cable yarding areas (generally slopes exceeding 35%) Cable yarding is currently proposed for approximately 54 acres (61% of the sale area). Cable yarding operations will be conducted in such a manner as to assure that associated impacts will not exceed those allowed under the Best Management Practices identified in the Salem ROD/RMP (Appendix C-1 and C-2).

- * Space skyline corridors no closer than 150 feet apart at one end and limit the width of each skyline corridor to a maximum average of 12 feet.
- * All yarding will be done with an intermediate support capable carriage equipped skyline system which is capable of yarding 2,000 feet slope distance from the landings with at least one end log suspension and laterally yarding at least 75 feet from the skyline corridors.

- * The number of landings and their size will be kept to a minimum required to reasonably harvest the units. Landings will be located by the purchaser and approved by the BLM. Landings will be constructed 150-200 feet apart. In general, the maximum size landing will be 80 feet in diameter.
 - * Hand water bar cable yarding corridors immediately after use where extensive gouging occurs as determined by the Authorized Officer.
 - * Where possible, retain unmerchantable tops and limbs within the treated stands. Trees intended to be retained for down woody debris will be felled contour to slope where possible.
 - * In areas where cable corridors converge, shade tolerant species such as western hemlock, western redcedar, grand fir and/or bigleaf maple will be planted, providing environmental conditions will allow sustained growth. If *Phellinus weirii* root-rot is present, grand fir and hemlock will not be planted.
3. Retain and protect all existing snags and downed logs - CWD (coarse woody debris) with the exception of those necessary to be cut and/or moved for reasons of safety. Cut snags will be retained as CWD. As appropriate, larger, "higher quality" snags and green wildlife trees will receive added protection by clumping up to approximately 3 to 5 green retention trees in direct proximity.
 4. The project will involve approximately 4300 feet of new road construction and reconstruction of an additional 1550 feet of existing natural surface road. All new and reconstructed roads will be considered to be temporary, as they will be decommissioned upon completion of the project. The project will also result in the designation/construction of approximately 11,000 feet of skid trails. Skid trails plus landings will be limited to less than 10% of the harvest units. All road construction, reconstruction and maintenance will be conducted in accordance with Best Management Practices as amended (ROD/RMP Appendix C-2 to Appendix C-6).
 5. The widths of the road clearing limits will vary but in general they will be as narrow as practicable while still allowing the safe passage of log trucks, and considering the protection of the roots of reserve trees. Clearing limits are measured between the tree trunks of reserve trees with clearing limits being wider at landings, around curves and near turnouts. Running surfaces will generally be about 12 feet wide, with a minimum of 3 feet from the edge of the running surface to the outside edge of the clearing limit. On "straight-a-ways", clearing limits will typically be approximately 18 feet wide for natural surfaced roads and approximately 22 feet for rocked roads.
 6. Road construction and reconstruction will be restricted to periods of low soil moisture (generally from June 15 through October 15) in order to limit the potential for surface runoff and erosion. Road construction will be terminated at the discretion of the Authorized Officer as necessary for weather conditions which may cause sediment runoff.
 7. All natural-surfaced roads and landings constructed with the intent to lay over through the winter (temporary roads) will be seeded with a native seed mix in areas prone to erosion as directed by the authorized officer. Such roads will be water barred as necessary. Cut banks, ditch lines, and other areas determined by the Authorized Officer to need stabilization will also be seeded with a native seed mix. Seeding will be prior to October 15 each year.
 8. Road decommissioning, road closure and skid trail obliteration:
 - * Following harvest, all natural surface roads and landings which are used to implement this

- project will be decommissioned by decompacting the road surface (subsoiling), removing of culverts, reestablishing the natural channel, water-barring where appropriate, and blocking to vehicular traffic. Road decommissioning will take place during period of low soil moisture, generally between June 15 and October 15 (in-stream work, unless waived by ODFW, will occur between June 1 and September 30).
- * Following harvest, all skid trails within unit 33-1 which are determined by the hydrologist to be affecting the hydrologic function of the watershed will be decommissioned by decompacting the trail surface (subsoiling) and if needed, water-barring and blocking to vehicular traffic. Within the thinning units (33-2 and 33-3), skid trails will not be subsoiled to avoid damaging the roots of reserve trees however if necessary, they may be blocked and/or water-barred.
 - * Cuts, fills and other disturbed areas will be seeded with a native grass seed mix prior to October 15 the same work year. This will help reduce the potential for erosion and the spread of noxious/exotic weeds. A site evaluation for other native plantings will be conducted as appropriate.
9. Waste and hazardous materials will be handled in accordance with Section 25, 26 and 27 of the timber sale contract (BLM Form 5450-3). In summary, these sections address watershed protection including water quality, erosion control and soil damage; refuse control and disposition of waste materials; and the proper storage and handling of hazardous materials. Site monitoring for solid and hazardous waste will be performed during the performance of this work in conjunction with normal contract administration. Any spills or releases resulting from operations shall be subject to the District Hazardous Materials Contingency Plan. All fueling and storage locations of fuels, lubricants, and any other toxic materials will be located outside of Riparian Reserves and in an area where the material will be contained and prevented from entering surface water.
10. Prior to entering the sale areas each work season, or before returning to the watershed after leaving it, any heavy machinery including but not exclusive to logging machinery and road construction machinery (with the exception of log trucks and pickup trucks used for daily personnel transport) will have all dirt and adhering vegetation cleaned from it to prevent the spread of noxious and/or invasive exotic weeds. Mechanically propelled brush cutters will be spray washed to remove all adhering weed seeds, vegetation and dirt prior to moving into the action area. Machinery will not be washed in an area where runoff could flow into adjacent streams.
11. If the quantity of slash at the landings is sufficient and accessible, it will be made available for public firewood removal permits following the completion of operation. Landing debris may be burned if it is determined by the BLM to be a fire hazard. Logging debris within the treatment units is generally not expected to be of such a volume as to create a fire hazard or inhibit reforestation however, if accumulations of slash warrant, some material within the regeneration harvest will be hand-piled and burned.

Design Features for the Regeneration Harvest Area: (unit 33-1, approximately 22 acres)

1. Sufficient green trees (generally larger than 15" dbh (diameter at breast height) will be retained to supplement existing snags to a total of at least 2 snags per acre. The unit will be evaluated

approximately 3 years after harvest and if necessary, some or all these trees will be converted into snags at that time, or at other points into the future.

2. Retain 6 green conifer trees per acre for use by wildlife. To the extent possible these trees will include the larger trees in the stand but smaller trees will also be reserved in order to retain trees with characteristics desirable to wildlife (broken or forked tops, hollow cavities, large crowns), as well as to adjust spacing and species mix, or to provide added protection to existing snags or CWD.
3. Sufficient material (either logs or standing trees) will also be retained to supplement existing CWD to a total of at least 240 linear feet of logs per acre which are greater than 20 inches in diameter at the large end and in decay class 1 or 2. Where insufficient numbers of 20 inch trees are available, the next largest size class will be used to fulfill this requirement.

A post-harvest CWD evaluation will be conducted approximately 3 years after harvest, and if it is determined as necessary to best meet CWD objectives, some of these trees will be felled for CWD at that time, or left to grow and felled for CWD at other points in the future. Trees felled for down woody debris will be felled contour to slope where possible.

4. It is estimated that up to approximately 20 green trees per acre will be reserved to supply the snag, wildlife and coarse woody debris requirements, distributed as noted in the above design features. Any of these reserve trees which should need to be cut for operational or safety reasons will be retained on site. Attempts will be made to distribute these reserve trees throughout the unit in that there will be no gaps larger than a few acres without a reserve tree, however because of the extensive occurrence of root disease within the stand and the silvicultural objective to reforest these areas with disease-resistant species, the location of retained, susceptible tree species will largely be dictated by the distribution of the disease. Because disease resistant tree species will be favored for retention within the root rot pockets, this could result in a rather clumpy or uneven distribution of the reserve trees. Generally, reserve trees will not be located within approximately 30 or 40 feet of a Riparian Reserve boundary.
5. Based upon the small number of hardwoods within the unit and to provide for diversity, all merchantable-sized hardwoods will be reserved.
6. All non-merchantable conifer tree species which are non-susceptible to root disease (primarily cedar) will be reserved.
7. Following harvest, reforestation will be accomplished primarily with a mixture of western redcedar, red alder and bigleaf maple. Site preparation will be accomplished by slashing all non-conifer vegetation to a height of six inches or less.

Design Features for the Commercial Thinning Areas: (units 33-2 & 33-3, totaling approximately 66 acres)

1. Conduct a commercial thinning in two harvest units totaling approximately 66 acres, with an emphasis on retaining the larger trees in the stand and those with crown ratios exceeding 35%. Thin stands down to a uniformly distributed residual basal area of approximately 130 to 150 ft² per acre.

2. All felling and yarding activities will be prohibited between approximately April 1 and July 15. This restriction will serve to limit damage to the residual stand as logging activities will not be occurring during the period of maximum bark slippage. If the purchaser is able to demonstrate the ability to conduct the operation with minimal amounts of damage to the residual stand, this stipulation may be waived or modified.
3. Retain, in approximate proportion to their existence in the stand, those trees with characteristics desirable to a range of wildlife species (hardwoods, trees with broken or forked tops, hollow cavities, large limbs).
4. Where *Phellinus weirii* is encountered within the thinning units, small “patch cuts” will remove all disease-susceptible trees. Disease resistant species will be reserved. Patches will be the minimum size required (generally less than two acres) to ensure that the pathogen was isolated from the residual stand. No “patch cuts” will be placed within those portions of the Riparian Reserves being treated.
5. Following completion of harvest, cut patches will be evaluated for planting with *P. weirii* resistant tree species. Where light levels are determined to be sufficient for survival and rapid growth, planting will be accomplished using western redcedar and red alder.
6. To be consistent with the *Dairy-McKay Watershed Analysis*, provide adequate shade to the stream, and protect the stream banks, channel and riparian zones which are adjacent to those portions of the Riparian Reserve being thinned, a “no-cut buffer” will be placed along all streams. These no-cut buffers will be at least 50 feet wide on both sides of all non-fish bearing streams and 100 feet wide on all fish bearing streams.
7. Ground-based equipment will not be permitted to enter those portions of the Riparian Reserves being treated except where they are able to stay on existing or new roads or unless it is necessary to access the ground based yarding area in the southwest corner of unit 33-3.
8. Loaded logging trucks or rubber-tired loader needing to operate on the portion of the road accessing unit 33-3 which is over 20% grade shall utilize an auxiliary means to power assist, or be specifically designed and approved by the manufacturer for operation on grades in excess of 20 percent.
9. Where skyline corridors are constructed, the Purchaser will be required to leave a specified number of the reserve trees necessary to be cut for corridor construction on-site to augment current CWD levels. This number will be dependent upon the length of the yarding corridor. On yarding corridors 500 feet or less in slope distance length, two of the larger-sized leave trees, as determined by the authorized officer, which are cut to create the corridors will be left on-site in a well-distributed pattern along the length of the corridor. On yarding corridors greater than 500 feet in slope distance length, six of the larger-sized leave trees as determined by the authorized officer, which are cut to create the corridors will be left on-site in a well-distributed pattern along the length of the corridors.

COMPLIANCE WITH DIRECTION

The analysis documented in the Powerline Dairy Timber Sale EA is site-specific and supplements analyses found in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, September 1994 (RMP/FEIS). This project has been designed to conform to the *Salem*

District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, May 1995 (ROD/RMP) and related documents which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District. All of these documents may be reviewed at the Tillamook Resource Area office.

Tillamook Resource Area is aware of the August 1, 2005, U.S. District Court order in *Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al. v. Rey et al.* which found portions of the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines* (January, 2004) (EIS) inadequate. Tillamook Resource Area is also aware of the recent January 9, 2006, Court order which:

- set aside the 2004 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) (2004 ROD) and
- reinstated the 2001 *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines* (January, 2001) (2001 ROD), including any amendments or modifications in effect as of March 21, 2004.

The order further directs "Defendants shall not authorize, allow, or permit to continue any logging or other ground disturbing activities....unless such activities are in compliance with the provisions of the 2001 ROD (as amended or modified as of March 21, 2004)". The litigation over the amendment that eliminated the Survey & Manage mitigation measure from the Northwest Forest Plan does not affect the Powerline Dairy Timber Sale. This is because biological surveys for Survey & Manage species were completed prior to the 2004 ROD and meet the 2001 protocol (2001 ROD as amended or modified as of March 21, 2004). Therefore, these projects comply with the Northwest Forest Plan prior to that amendment.

I have attached the documentation of the wildlife and botany compliance reviews undertaken by resource area staff with my concurrence and signature. Based on the survey results, there are currently no known sites of Survey and Manage species that require management within the project area. It is my determination that the Powerline Dairy Timber Sale project complies with the provisions of the 2001 ROD, as amended or modified as of March 21, 2004, and that this decision is in compliance with the 2001 ROD as stated in Point (3) on page 14 of the January 9, 2006 Court order.

Tillamook Resource Area is also aware of ongoing litigation *Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations et al. v. National Marine Fisheries Service et al. (W.D. Wash.)* related to the 2004 supplemental environmental impact statement for the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS). The Magistrate Judge issued findings and recommendations to the court on March 29, 2006. The court has not found this amendment to be "illegal," nor did the Magistrate recommend such a finding. Given the court has not yet adopted the findings and recommendations, we will appropriately continue to follow the current direction in the 2004 ROD, until ordered otherwise. The Powerline Dairy Timber Sale tiers to this document as the clarification of how to address the ACS. Since it was only a clarification, and did not alter any of the on-the-ground components of the standards and guidelines designed for achieving the ACS objectives, whether the court upholds the amendment or not should have little practical effect at the project level.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives considered in detail included the required "no action" alternative, proposed action alternative, and two other alternatives that addressed the major issue and were responsive to the purpose

and need for action. A complete description of the alternatives is contained in chapter 2.3 of the EA.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Considering public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, and the management direction contained in the ROD/RMP, I am proposing to implement the preferred alternative as described above. My rationale for this proposed decision follows:

1. The selected alternative addresses the identified purpose and need for action and fulfills the project objectives, as stated on page 9 of the EA. These objectives include: enhance the future timber-producing capability of the GFMA (General Forest Management Area) lands by managing timber stands to reduce the risk of loss from disease (see EA Appendix 2); provide for the maintenance of ecologically valuable structural components such as down logs, snags, and large trees (see EA chapter 2.3.2 and Appendix 2); help to meet the planned timber sale volume for the Tillamook Resource Area PSQ (Probable Sale Quantity) (see EA Table 1); and help to produce a sustainable supply of timber and forest commodities which will contribute to community stability through providing social and economic benefits to local communities through the supply of merchantable timber to local mills and providing some additional contract work.
2. The “No Action” alternative was not selected because it does not address the purpose and need for action. Specifically, under the “no action” alternative the future timber-producing capability of the GFMA lands would not be enhanced in that the level of competition among trees would continue to be high, live crown ratios would decrease, diameter growth would decline, tree mortality and the presence of *P. weirii* would increase and understory development would be limited (EA Appendix 2).
3. Alternative 3 was not selected because it does not address the purpose and need for action on 22 acres within unit 33-1; under this alternative, the unit is dropped from treatment resulting in the future timber-producing capability of the GFMA lands within the unit not being enhanced. Without treatment, the general health and vigor of the unit 33-1 as well as the surrounding stands would be expected to continue to decline as *P. weirii* infects a larger number of trees resulting in decreased growth and increased tree mortality
4. Alternative 4, which would have used helicopter yarding for all timber to be harvested, was not selected primarily because it would provide less support to the ROD/RMP objective of contributing to community stability. Although our analysis indicated that the value of the timber to be removed would be sufficient to support the additional cost of helicopter yarding, logging costs under a helicopter system would likely consume nearly all of the residual value of the timber to be sold. This would then eliminate most of the timber sale receipts on which the 50% share provided to the O&C Counties is based. The result would be a substantial decrease in this project’s contribution to community stability.
5. The preferred alternative is consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and programs (EA chapter 3.7). The selected alternative has design features to minimize negative impacts and benefit the overall condition in the watershed. (EA, chapter 2).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In compliance with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), the proposed action was listed in the June, September, and December 1998, March and June 1999 and in the February 2000 editions of the quarterly *Salem District Project Update* which was mailed to over 1,000 addresses, and a letter and

scoping report (Project Record document 14) was mailed on December 16, 1998 to 125 potentially affected and/or interested individuals, groups, and agencies (Project Record Document #16). A total of six letters and two oral responses were received as a result of this scoping effort. All public input was assigned a number and filed within the Project Record (Project Record Documents 17-24). The IDT reviewed, clarified, and assessed the public comments. The disposition of those comments is contained in Appendix 9 to the EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based upon review of the EA, I have determined that this action is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the following discussion:

Context. The preferred alternative is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 88 acres of BLM-administered lands which, by themselves, do not have international, national, region wide, or statewide importance. The discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended action and is within the context of local importance. Chapter 3 of the EA details the effects of the preferred alternative. None of the effects identified, including direct, indirect and cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effect described in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, dated September, 1994.

Intensity. The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.**

Due to the preferred alternative's design features, the predicted environmental effects, most noteworthy, include: 1/ The enhancement of the future timber-producing capability of the GFMA (EA Appendix 2); 2/ Social and economic benefits to local communities through the supply of approximately 2 million board feet of merchantable timber to local mills (EA Table 1), some contract work, and firewood; 3/ Some potential of sediment movement from ground disturbing activities such as ground-based yarding and road construction/decommissioning, but the overall effects on water quality are expected to be low and of short duration (1 - 5 years) (EA chapter 3); 4/ no loss in population viability of special status or special attention species; 5/ no impacts to water temperature, streamflows or stream channel stability.

2. **The degree to which the preferred alternative will affect public health or safety.** Public health and safety was not identified as an issue. This forest management project is comparable to other forest management projects which have been implemented within the Tillamook Resource Area with no unusual health or safety concerns.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There are no historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wild and scenic rivers, or wildernesses located within the project area (EA Appendix 4). The project is not located in designated critical habitat for the northern spotted owl or the marbled murrelet. There is no designated critical habitat for Upper Willamette River chinook salmon (chinook are not known to

occur in Dairy Creek currently or historically) in the Dairy Creek Watershed. Upper Willamette River Steelhead trout are present in the watershed; however no critical habitat has been designated in the Dairy Creek Watershed.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects of the preferred alternative on the quality of the human environment are adequately understood by the IDT to provide analysis for this proposed decision. A complete disclosure of the predicted effects of the preferred alternative is contained within chapter 3 of the EA.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The preferred alternative is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas and have found effects to be reasonably predictable. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in chapter 3 or the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment which are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about future consideration.** The preferred alternative does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects nor does it represent a decision in principle about future consideration. The preferred alternative accelerates the development of some late-successional forest habitat characteristics on 88 acres of land managed by the BLM. Any future projects will be evaluated through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and will stand on their own as to environmental effects.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the preferred alternative in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the preferred alternative is contained in chapter 3 of the EA.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other 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.** The preferred alternative will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will the preferred alternative cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, Appendix 4).
9. **The degree to which the action 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.** Based upon the modification and removal of dispersal habitat, the preferred alternative “*may affect and is not likely to adversely affect*” the spotted owl. The preferred alternative will have “*no effect*” upon the marbled murrelet, bald eagle, and Columbian white-tailed deer. Also, the treatment is not expected to result in a trend toward federal listing or loss of population viability of any of the wildlife survey and manage species, special status species, or species of concern. (EA Table 12 and Appendix 3).

Additionally, the preferred alternative will have “*no effect*” upon upper Willamette Steelhead trout and designated critical habitat, and upper Willamette chinook salmon designated critical habitat within the Dairy Creek 5th field Watershed. Within the Scappoose 5th Field Watershed this action will have “*no effect*” on Lower Columbia River steelhead trout, Lower Columbia River chinook salmon or their designated critical habitat, Columbia River chum salmon and Lower Columbia River

coho salmon.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The preferred alternative does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The EA and supporting Project Record contain discussions pertaining to the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat) and Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice). State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process (EA, pp. 4-5, Appendix 1). Furthermore, the preferred alternative is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs (EA chapter 3.7). The preferred alternative is also consistent with the *2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (Jan. 2001)* (Project Record Documents 78 and 79).

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003, protests of this decision may be made within 15 days of the publication of a notice of decision in a newspaper of general circulation. This notice of decision will be published in the *South County Spotlight* newspaper on August 23, 2006. To protest this decision a person must submit a written protest to William B. Keller, Tillamook Field Manager, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141 by the close of business (4:00 p.m.) on September 7, 2006. The protest must clearly and concisely state the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

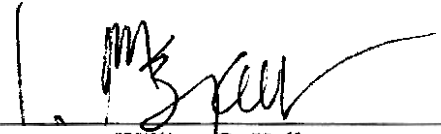
As stated previously, the density management will likely be accomplished in a commercial timber sale expected to be offered in 2006. At the time of advertisement (notice of sale) what constitutes a protestable decision is limited to 1) whether there has been new BLM direction requiring a change from that in the Hoag Pass Projects EA and/or 2) changes between the timber sale design as described in the Hoag Pass Projects EA and that in the final timber sale contract.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

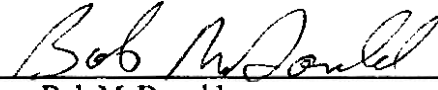
If no protest is received within 15 days after publication of the Notice of Sale, this decision will become final and may be implemented immediately. If a timely protest is received, this decision will be reconsidered in light of the statements of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available and a final decision will be issued in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3.

CONTACT PERSON

For additional information concerning this preliminary decision, contact Sandra Holmberg – Project Leader, Tillamook Resource Area Office, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141; telephone (503) 815-1128.

Approved by: 
William B. Keller
Tillamook Field Manager

Aug. 22, 06
Date

NEPA compliance: 
Bob McDonald
Environmental Coordinator

8/22/06
Date