

East Fork Nehalem Project

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement, Fish Passage and Riparian Planting

**Finding of No Significant Impact For
Environmental Assessment
Number OR-086-07-05**

*United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
Salem District
Tillamook Resource Area
Columbia County, Oregon*

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Responsible Agency:	Bureau of Land Management
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Abstract: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to implement a multi-year fish and wildlife habitat enhancement project within the East Fork Nehalem watershed. The project includes fish habitat enhancement on a total of approximately 7.8 miles of stream, wildlife habitat enhancement on approximately 216 acres, riparian planting on approximately 10 acres, and fish passage work at two culverts. Project actions on BLM land would be in the Riparian Reserve land use allocation (LUA). Project actions would also occur on private and private industrial land in cooperation with the land owners. Sections with proposed actions are Township 5 North, Range 3 West sections 31, 32, and 33, and Township 4 North, Range 3 West sections 5-9, 16, 17, 19 and 21 (Willamette Meridian).



BLM/OR/WA/AE-08/021+1792

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering economic use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Introduction

The East Fork Nehalem Project Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the environmental analysis of the actions proposed. The EA is attached to and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact determination (FONSI). The EA analyzes fish habitat enhancement on 7.8 miles of stream, wildlife habitat enhancement on 216 acres, fish passage work at two culverts and 10 acres of riparian planting. Sections with proposed actions are Township 5 North, Range 3 West sections 31- 33, and Township 4 North, Range 3 West sections 5-9, 16, 17, 19 and 21 (Willamette Meridian).

The EA and FONSI will be made available for public review from **August 6, 2008 to September 5, 2008**. The notice for public comment will be published by the South County Spotlight newspaper. Comments received by the Tillamook Resource Area, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon, 97141, on or before **September 5, 2008** will be considered in making the final decisions for these projects.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon review of the East Fork Nehalem Project EA and supporting project record, I have determined that these projects are not major federal actions and would 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. There are no site specific impacts that would require supplemental/additional information to the analysis done in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, September 1994 (RMP/FEIS). Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the following discussion:

Context: The proposed projects are site-specific actions intended to directly benefit fish and wildlife including a total of 216 acres of wildlife habitat enhancement, 7.8 miles of fish habitat enhancement, 10 acres of riparian planting and two fish passage projects. Project actions would occur on BLM administered, private industrial and private lands. These actions by themselves do not have international, national, region-wide, or state-wide importance.

The discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended actions and is within the context of local importance. The EA details the effects of the action alternatives; none of the effects identified, including cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effects described in the RMP/FEIS.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27. The discussions below apply all project elements contained within the East Fork Nehalem Project EA.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** Due to the project design features and the enhancement nature of the proposed project, the most noteworthy predicted impacts include: (1) Increased levels of large woody debris (LWD) throughout 7.8 miles of OC coho habitat that will lead to a greater level of complexity in the stream channel. A higher level of complexity has been shown to increase summer rearing and over winter survival capabilities, as well as increase the volume of spawning gravels. (2) A gain of approximately 2.2 miles of fish habitat resulting from removing, replacing or improving passage at the proposed culvert sites. (3) A slight short-term increase in turbidity is expected during fish habitat enhancement and culvert replacement or removal work in the stream channel and during high flow events for the first few years until the stream adapts to the newly placed LWD. (4) Increased late-seral stage wildlife habitat on about 216 acres in riparian reserves. Wildlife enhancement activities include creating snags, and snag-topped trees as well as coarse woody debris by felling,

girdling and topping conifers. (4) Planting conifers in riparian reserves would increase long-term bank stability and shade as well as provide a future source of LWD on about 10 acres. (5) Short term impacts to bank stability are anticipated from equipment working in the stream channel. (6) Social and economic benefits to the local community through contract work associated with the wildlife habitat enhancement and fish habitat restoration projects.

None of the environmental effects disclosed above and discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the RMP/FEIS.

2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety. Public health and safety was not identified as an issue. The proposed project is comparable to other similar enhancement projects undertaken within the Salem District 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 federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, park lands, prime farm lands, areas of critical environmental concern, wetlands or wildernesses areas located within the analysis area (EA, Appendix 2). Cultural resources are known to be present within the analysis area but not in the proposed action areas. The proposed project is not expected to affect cultural resource, but if cultural resources were found in pre-disturbance surveys, they would be assessed for significance before work began. There are no other known ecologically critical areas within or adjacent to the proposed project areas.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. Scoping of the proposed project resulted in no project specific comments from the public. It is highly unlikely that any portion of the analyzed actions would be controversial.

The effects of the proposed project on the quality of the human environment were adequately understood by the interdisciplinary team to provide an environmental analysis. A complete disclosure of the predicted effects of the proposed project is contained within Chapter 2 of the EA and associated appendices.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The proposed project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar projects in similar areas and have found effects to be reasonably predictable. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in 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 a future consideration. The proposed project does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. 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 proposed project in the context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions (Appendix 3). No significant cumulative effects have been identified. A complete disclosure of the effects of the action and no action alternatives is contained in Chapter 2 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 proposed project 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 proposed project cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, Appendix 1).

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

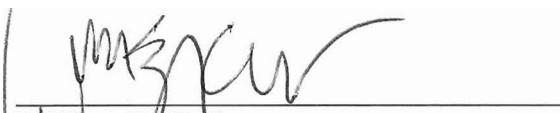
There are expected effects resulting from the implementation of the proposed project upon the Northern spotted owl and Oregon Coast coho salmon. Effects to OC coho and their critical habitat are detailed in Chapter 2 of the EA and include minimal short-term increased turbidity within Critical Habitat; disruption of normal feeding and resting behavior; and possible direct mortality of a few individual juvenile fish. These impacts would have no discernable effect on the ESU. There would be no long-term adverse affect to OC coho critical habitat. Implementing the project as proposed "*May Affect, and is Likely to Adversely Affect*" OC coho.

Expected effects on spotted owls are detailed in Chapter 2 of the EA. There are no known current or historic nest sites and no designated critical habitat for Northern spotted owls within the project area, and very marginal suitable habitat. Impacts to Northern spotted owls are limited to possible disturbance by equipment if work occurs during the critical nesting period (March 1 – July 7). Implementing the project as proposed "*May Affect, but is Not Likely to Adversely Affect*" Northern spotted owls.

10. Whether the action threatens to violate; Federal, State, or local law or requirements for the protection of the environment. The proposed project 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, Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice), and Oregon Scenic Waterways Act. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, the proposed project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Prepared by: 
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10/27/08
Date

Approved by: 
William B. Keller
Tillamook Field Manager

Nov. 3, 08
Date