



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459

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### **In Reply Refer To:**

1792/5400 (ORC030)

EA OR125-08-01

North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study

***March 3, 2009***

Dear Concerned Citizen:

We have prepared a North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study Environmental Assessment (EA OR125-08-01) and a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The proposed action alternative proposes to re-thin the North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study Sites on the Coos Bay District. This treatment would initiate the next phase of this long-term research project on these sites. The Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Northwest Research Station, U.S. Geological Survey, and Oregon State University established the Density Management and Riparian Buffer Study in 1994 to demonstrate and test options for young stand management in western Oregon. The environmental assessment analyzes a no-action alternative and a proposed-action alternative.

You are encouraged to read the EA and comment on the appropriateness of the FONSI prior to the end of the 30-day comment period, April 4, 2009. This EA is located on our BLM web site at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/plans/index.php>. A Decision Document will be published prior to implementing the activities.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address above during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA document or other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Questions should be directed to Rick Schultz at (541) 751-4223. Written comments on the appropriateness of the FONSI may be sent to BLM, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459-2000, Attn: Rick Schultz. You may e-mail your comments to [OR\\_CoosBay\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov), Attn: Rick Schultz.

Sincerely,

***A. Dennis Turowski***

A. Dennis Turowski  
Umpqua Field Manager



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### In Reply Refer To:

**1792(ORC030)**

**EA-OR125-08-01**

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

For

### North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study

**EA OR125-08-01**

## I. Introduction

An Interdisciplinary Team for the “North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study Environmental Assessment” (EA) within the Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District, Bureau of Land Management, has analyzed two alternatives: a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative would defer action on these forest stands. The Proposed Action Alternative proposes to re-thin the two Density Management Study Sites on the Coos Bay District. This treatment would initiate the next phase of this long-term research project on these sites. The Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Northwest Research Station, U.S. Geological Survey, and Oregon State University established the Density Management and Riparian Buffer Study in 1994 to demonstrate and test options for young stand management. Table I-1 summarizes the proposed activities in the Proposed Action.

**Table -1: Summary of Proposed Activities**

Site	North Soup	Blue Retro
<b>Legal Description</b>	Sec. 16, T.23S., R.09W., WM	Sec. 25, 26, 35, & 36, T.26S., R.12W., WM
<b>Acres in the treatment replications including re-thinning, gaps and leave patches/retention areas, stream buffers</b>	175 acres	48 acres
<b>Acres of no-treatment control</b>	58 acres	15 acres
<b>Road renovation</b>	6.8 miles	4.5 miles
<b>Road improvement</b>	1.0 mile	None
<b>New road construction</b>	None	None
<b>Road decommission</b>	0.5 mile	None
<b>Culvert installation on fish-bearing streams</b>	None	None
<b>Coarse wood debris recruitment (both sites)</b>	Fall 2 dominant or co-dominant trees per acre to provide a pulse of coarse woody debris. Existing decay class I or II fallen trees can be used to satisfy this requirement.	
<b>Snag recruitment (both sites)</b>	Retain 5 trees per acre, in addition to stocking target, to be converted into snags if natural recruitment does not result in 5 snags per acre 10 years after thinning.	

## II. Background

This EA is in conformance with the *Coos Bay District 2008 Western Oregon Plan Revision Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* [2008 ROD/RMP] (USDI-BLM 2008a), and specifically the 2008 ROD/RMP direction regarding ongoing research projects (USDI-BLM 2008a, p. 58). This EA is tiered to the *2008 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the*

*Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management [2008 Final EIS] (USDI-BLM 2008b).*

This EA is also tiered to and in conformance with the following documents: the *Management of Port-Orford-cedar in Southwest Oregon Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (USDA-FS/USDI-BLM 2004a) and its *Record of Decision* (USDI-BLM 2004); the *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States* (USDI-BLM 2007a) and its *Record of Decision* (USDI-BLM 2007b) and the *Coos Bay Integrated Noxious Weed Program* (EA#OR-120-97-11 on file at the Coos Bay District Office).

All Federal agencies are charged with managing programs to enhance the recovery of Federally listed endangered and threatened species and their habitats (Section 7(a) (1) of the Endangered Species Act). Implementing the proposed actions are expected to benefit numerous threatened, endangered and candidate species.

### **III. Finding of No Significant Impact**

A careful review of the EA, which I herein adopt, indicates that there would not be a significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of any of the alternatives. I agree with this finding and determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This determination is based on consideration of the following factors:

1. The proposed activities are not national or regional in scope. The proposed alternative would treat 175 acres in the North Soup Density Management Area in the Mill Creek – Lower Umpqua River fifth field watershed, and 48 acres in the Blue Retro Density Management Area in the North Fork Coquille River fifth field watershed.
2. The proposed activities have no impact on critical elements of the human environment such as park lands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. The individual project areas within the North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study areas are located at previously disturbed sites, and the silvicultural prescriptions would help restore the natural physical environment.
3. The effects on the quality of the human environment of the proposed activities are not highly controversial.
4. The possible effects of the proposed activities on the quality of the human environment are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risk.
5. The proposed projects do not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant effects.
6. There are no significant cumulative effects identified by this assessment. Although there would be removal of vegetation within the Riparian Management Area, potential adverse impacts to the aquatic environment are eliminated or substantially avoided by the implementation of no-harvest buffers along streams.

7. The proposed activities would not affect cultural resources listed in, or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

8. The proposed projects would fully comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended.

- Informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as provided in Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536 (a)(2) and (a)(4) as amended) is completed. The initial study treatment for the North Soup study area was determined to be a “not likely to adversely effect” on both spotted owl and murrelet and a Biological Opinion was issued on February 18, 1998 (Biological Opinion No. 1-7-98-F-079). A similar project adjacent to the North Soup Study Area was the 2004 Beaman Soup project. A Biological Assessment was prepared in 2004, which assessed potential impacts to all listed species and critical habitat within the fifth-field watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence (No. 1-15-05-I-0065) supporting that the much larger Beaman Soup project area and actions in the fifth-field watershed were “not likely to adversely affect” any listed species or critical habitat.

The Blue Retro study site does not include critical habitat for any listed species. The effects determination for the Blue Retro Study Area would be “no effect” on northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets or their critical habitat.

- There are no ESA listed fish species in the North Soup Density Management Area or in the proximity of the Blue Retro Density Management Area. Based on analysis by the Fisheries Biologist, we find that the proposed action will have no effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Therefore, consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not warranted. This conclusion further supports a finding of no significant impact.

9. There are no irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments identified by this assessment, except for a minor consumption of fossil fuels for project operations.

10. The proposed activities would not violate Federal, State, or local laws imposed for the protection of the environment.

*/s/ A. Dennis Turowski*

*February 26, 2009*

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A. Dennis Turowski  
Umpqua Field Manager

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Date