

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
DEER LAKE EA No. OR-110- 02-026

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The Deer Lake Environmental Assessment (attached) analyzes a proposal to improve the ecological health of forest stands on approximately 3,055 acres in the Little Butte Creek Watershed east of Ashland, OR.

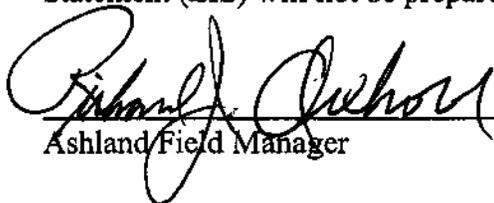
The proposed action and project design features are further described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA). This FONSI and attached EA are tiered to the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (USDI, USDA 2001) and the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)* (USDI 1995b). These Resource Management Plans incorporate the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (NFP) (USDA and USDI 1994). These documents are available at the Medford BLM office and the Medford BLM web site at <<http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>>.

Through the EA process, the interdisciplinary team reviewed the following critical elements of the human environment as they relate to this project: air quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), cultural resources, environmental justice, farmlands, floodplains, Native American religious concerns, invasive nonnative species, threatened and endangered species, hazardous/solid wastes, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and wilderness. No substantive site specific environmental changes would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives as discussed in the associated EA. Should threatened or endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources be discovered, they would be protected.

The Deer Lake EA was advertised for a 30-day public review period beginning on May 6, 2002. Written comments were received from Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, and one private citizen. The Deer Lake Interdisciplinary Team reviewed the comments and did not find any information not already taken into consideration by the team during the analysis of the Deer Lake project. This review provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the BLM's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence on July 10, 2002 and found that the proposed action was Not Likely to Adversely Affect Southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon or their designated critical habitat. Formal consultation for the northern spotted owl was completed for timber sales in the project area (BO 1-7-01-F-032). A no effect determination was made by BLM regarding the federally listed *Fritillaria gentneri*.

On the basis of the information contained in the attached EA and all other information available to me as summarized above, it is my determination that the proposed action alternative does not constitute a significant impact affecting the quality of the human environment as defined by 40 CFR § 1508.27 beyond those described in the Medford District RMP. For this reason, a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be prepared.


Ashland Field Manager

09-03-02
Date

Decision Record
for the
Deer Lake EA No. OR-110-02-026

Decision Record & Rationale

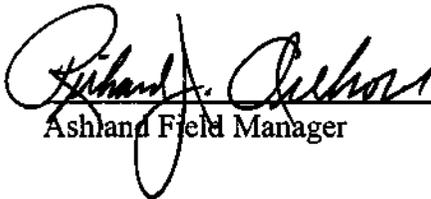
My decision is to proceed with the proposed action as described in the attached EA. The Deer Lake project provides an opportunity to accomplish many different watershed restoration objectives. Fire suppression and other past management activities have resulted in very dense forested stands at risk of catastrophic wildfire and/or insect epidemics. Tree density is currently inhibiting the development of late successional characteristics in many areas. This project will use a variety of tools to mimic the role fire has historically played in the ecosystem by reducing understory density and reintroducing fire through controlled, prescribed burns. At the same time, this project will help facilitate the progression of late successional characteristics in forest stands by maintaining or improving existing structural and species diversity

This project will also reduce overall long-term sedimentation levels in the project area through road improvements, road decommissioning, and stream crossing improvement. This project will reduce road densities in the project area from 4 miles of roads per square mile to 3.8 miles of roads per square mile. Long-term sedimentation rates in streams are projected to decrease by 30 tons annually.

This decision incorporates mitigating measures to protect the Paradise Lost Spotted Owl Nest Site which is not currently protected under the Northwest Forest Plan. This decision limits management activities in Unit 28 (9 acres) and Unit 33 west of the 37-2E-17 road (approximately 23 acres) to those activities specifically designed to protect or enhance the health of the forest stand for spotted owls. Pre-commercial treatments, commercial treatments, or follow-up fuel hazard reduction activities would take place after consultation with a district wildlife biologist.

Included in this decision are several clarifications to the EA. In Appendix C, project design features listed under Harvest and Logging Systems (C-5) and Botany (C-11) contain conflicting information regarding protective measures for *Cimicifuga elata* populations. Contractors will be instructed to incorporate the design feature on page C-11. Additionally, several Survey and Manage species (*Buxbaumia viridis*, *Helvella maculata*, *Pithya vulgaris*, *Plectania milleri*, *Sarcoshaera coronaria* (syn. *S. eximia*)) described in the EA have been removed from protective status (2002 Annual Species Review) and will not receive the protective buffers described in the EA.

Upon careful review of all the information available to me, it is my decision that the implementation of the Deer Lake project will be another step toward the restoration of forest health in the Little Butte Creek Watershed.


Ashland Field Manager

09-03-02
Date