

DECISION RECORD
Galesville Valley Project Environmental Assessment
EA# OR-118-03-003

Decision

It is my decision to implement Alternative 2 and the Project Design Features proposed in the Galesville Valley Project Environmental Assessment (EA # OR118-03-003). The approved action will result in commercial and noncommercial density management treatments within the South Umpqua River/Galesville Late Successional Reserve (LSR) to promote late successional forest and habitat characteristics in the Glendale Resource Area. Areas within the LSR will be accelerated into the development of high quality late successional forest and will result in more suitable habitat for late-successional species, such as the northern spotted owl. As some areas of the LSR are not currently in suitable spotted owl habitat. Project actions are contained within the boundaries of the Cow Creek fifth-field watershed of Douglas County.

The Galesville Valley Project area begins approximately 2 miles east of Interstate 5 and extends 2 miles east of the Galesville Reservoir. The legal description is T31S, R4W, sections: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, & 35 in Douglas County. Lands within the Planning Area are intermingled blocks of public and private lands; however, my decisions apply only to BLM-administered lands. Project activities will begin within fiscal year 2004.

Density management treatments will thin overstocked, overtopped, dying, and suppressed smaller diameter trees, both conifer and hardwood. These treatments will include cutting trees up to 7 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) to increase spacing between trees, to accelerate growth, reduce disease, and maintain species composition (EA, p. 9).

The first priority for down woody material is to supply 2-3 artificial large woody debris (LWD) logs/ acre. Merchantable trees between 4" and 7" dbh will be removed to the road. The amount of woody material removed to the road would depend on the amount present that can be cut. Merchantable material may be removed to roads by traditional cable yarding with lateral yarding capabilities, tractor winching with lateral hauling, monocable, log chutes, and removal by hand (EA, p. 15-16). The project area consists of 503 acres over 19 units. The remaining down woody material will be hand piled and burned (Table 2-1, p. 16-17).

Efforts will be made to slow the spread of laminated root rot identified in unit 24-2 and possibly 24-3. Small openings (40' radius) around infected individual trees and small groups of trees will be created. Infected trees and adjacent uninfected Douglas-fir trees would be removed by the treatment. Conifer species, other than Douglas-fir, will be retained. Within infected areas that are larger than one-quarter acre, a heavy thinning will occur to retain trees showing few, if any, signs of infection.

In units 22-1 & 22-2 many of the trees have high height/diameter ratios and could possibly collapse if the stand were opened up too much during a thinning. To lessen the

chance of this happening, the unit will be divided into 4 strips of roughly equal widths perpendicular to the contour. Strips 2 and 4, as numbered south to north, retain crown spacing at a 3 foot maximum. Within strip 2, ten percent of the trees remaining after the spacing operation will be girdled. Girdling of additional trees would further release the residuals but would provide support for live trees within the strip. Within strip 4, twenty percent of the trees remaining after the spacing operation will be girdled. Spacing strips 1 and 3 as described in the General treatments section above will be implemented.

Crown space conifers 7 inches and less in diameter so that there is 5-10 feet between crowns of selected trees in unit 31-1, within the area east of road 32-4-6.1 to the creek and through the other side. Conifers 7-10" dbh will be crown spaced so that there is 5-10 feet between crowns of selected trees. Girdling at a rate of two trees for every tree felled will be done for trees that are 7-10" dbh so as to provide both short-term snags and woody debris. These cut trees will remain on site. The maximum distance between boles of trees within this diameter range will be 25 feet regardless of crown widths. Where there are no trees with diameters 7-10" dbh, conifers seven inches and less in diameter will be spaced so that there will be 3-6 feet between crowns. Cut conifers greater than 4" will be limbed. Brush will be slashed. There will be a no treatment area that extends from high water mark of the creek for twenty-five feet away from the creek. Slash less than 4" DBH will be hand piled. Hand piles will be burned later.

Two main stems of hardwoods will be retained for units 22-3, 23-1, 27-1, 35-3 & 35-4.

A gate will be installed on road 32-4-6.1 for annual season closure to all motorized vehicles between October 15th to May 15th after the first season of project work. Subsurface scarification of the road surface, seeding, and hand water bars will be created every 150 feet of this road upon completion of proposed activities after each season. Operations will not be allowed during rainfall events. The practice of gating roads to minimize erosion and sedimentation is defined as a Best Management Practice in the Medford District Resource Management Plan (USDI 1995, p. 164.) Best Management Practice's are required by the Federal Clean Water Act to reduce nonpoint source pollution to the maximum extent practicable and achieve Oregon water quality standards.

Hauling will be suspended in the following circumstances: (1) when water is flowing on the road surface or ditchlines, (2) when snow on the road is melting, or (3) when loaded log truck tire deflection exceeds 2 inches into the road surface anywhere over the entire road length. Hauling can resume no sooner than 48 hours after a rainfall event. Snow removal (blading) will not be authorized in order to prevent loss of rock surfacing.

No piling or burning for fuels treatments will take place within 25 feet of streams. The Standards and Guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan require that fuel treatment practices meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives and minimize disturbance of riparian ground cover and vegetation (USDA/USDI 1994, p. C-35).

Cable yarding and tractor winching will not occur from March through May of the same year (USDI 1995, p. 166).

Rationale

The decision to implement this proposal meets the purpose and need identified in the EA and furthers the intent established in the Northwest Forest Plan and the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystem, which serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest-related species.

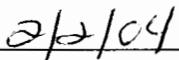
There were 2 letters from the public regarding the Galesville Valley Project Environmental Assessment. It should be noted that the intent of this environmental assessment (under the National Environmental policy Act CEQ regulation 1508.28) is to determine if there are significant impacts and whether these impacts have already been analyzed in the Medford Resource Management Plan and Northwest Forest Plan. The Galesville Valley Project EA tiers to these higher level plans. I carefully reviewed the public comments we received before coming to this decision. Both were in support of the proposed action.

I am confident that the EA represents a thorough analysis of the site-specific impacts to affected habitats and species, in light of the more comprehensive analysis done in the Medford RMP and Northwest Forest Plan to which the EA is tiered. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) calls for concise and focused descriptions of the proposals and their effects; not all background information is required to be part of the NEPA document.

In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulations (43 CFR 5003.2(a) & 5003.3 (a)), the decision for this project will not become effective, or be open to formal protest, until a notice of decision appears in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located.

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Lynda L. Boody
Field Manager, Glendale Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management

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Date

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
for the Galesville Valley Project Environmental Assessment
EA# OR-118-03-003**

The proposed actions for the Galesville Valley Project are described in the environmental assessment (EA) and can be obtained at the Medford District or on the Medford BLM internet site: <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford>.

The proposed action is located in: T31S, R4W, sections: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, & 35 in Douglas County.

The following critical elements identified in the BLM handbook will not be adversely affected by this project and have been analyzed in the EA: air quality, areas of critical environmental concern, historical or cultural resources, prime or unique farmlands, floodplains, Native American religious sites, invasive species, energy, threatened or endangered species, known hazardous waste areas, water quality, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness and environmental justice.

Surveys for Survey and Manage plant and animal species have been completed and appropriate protocol buffer measures will be applied. The effects on Threatened and Endangered Species and Special Status Species are described in the EA. There will be no effect on the northern spotted owl since no harvest treatments will occur within spotted owl habitat. The upper size limit to be harvested within this project is 8" dbh. Dispersal habitat begins at an 11" dbh dominant stand. The Galesville Project will have a positive effect on some species several decades in the future. The Glendale Resource Area will continue to survey for spotted owls in the future. An ESA Section 7 determination of "No Effect" was made by the Glendale Resource Area's Field Manager. The estimation of impacts was based on research, professional judgment and experience of the interdisciplinary team. This method of estimating effects to the environment reduces the uncertainties to a level which does not involve highly unknown or unique risks.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have reviewed the environmental assessment, including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts not previously identified, and I have also reviewed the comments received from the public concerning this proposal. I have determined that the Galesville Valley Project will not have any significant impacts on the human environment beyond those already described in the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, approved April 13, 1994; the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* for the Medford District, approved April 1995; and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*, approved January 2001. Therefore a supplemental EIS is not required.

Lynda L. Boody

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Glendale Resource Area Field Manager

Medford District, BLM

2/2/04

Date