

Decision Record/Rationale and Finding of No Significant Impact for Edelweiss Fuels and Thinning Project Environmental Assessment

EA#OR134-EA-02-014

Decision:

It is my decision to implement Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) to return the project area to conditions more closely resembling the historic range of variability for forested lands in similar elevations in northcentral Washington. The project will reduce fuels and thin fir trees on 31 acres of the project area, leaving a more open and widely spaced stand of ponderosa pine and fir. Management actions to be implemented include harvesting the merchantable trees with ground-based equipment, cutting excess small trees, machine and hand piling the slash, and burning the slash. No roads will be constructed, but some small landings will be built.

The harvest area will be monitored following project activities to determine if tree regeneration is adequate. Any weed outbreaks that are observed will be treated aggressively to achieve control.

Rationale for the Decision:

Implementing the proposed action will greatly reduce the fuel loading in the project area. The proposed action will reduce the threat of a wildfire starting or moving through the BLM property and threatening the adjacent Edelweiss subdivision. The treatments will improve the ability of fire crews to control a fire that may occur in the future. Following treatments, any fire that occurs in the project area will be more likely to stay on the ground and less likely to move into tree crowns, which makes control difficult and enhances spotting from wind borne embers across roads and control lines.

No sensitive cultural, wildlife, plant, or hydrologic features were found during project inventories, but if any of these are located, any ongoing project activities will be stopped until the new conditions can be evaluated by the appropriate project specialist.

The No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) was considered, but it would not meet the purpose and need for the project and reduce wildfire potential. The proposed action on the other hand complements the National Fire Plan goals to reduce wildfire threat to rural communities.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Any public input received during that review period will be considered and may result in an amendment to this decision.

Based on the attached environmental assessment, the above rationale, and other available information, I have determined that the selected alternative does not constitute a major Federal action affecting the quality of the human environment, constituting a Finding of No Significant Action (FONSI). Therefore, an EIS is not necessary and will not be prepared.

The EA was available for a two-week public review, and no comments were received.

James F. Fisher, Field Manager
Wenatchee Resource Area

Date