



# United States Department of the Interior

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In reply refer to:  
EA OR128-03-02

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) For Curry Hardwood Conversions EA No. OR128-03-02**

### **I. Introduction**

An interdisciplinary team for the Curry Hardwood Conversions EA within the Myrtlewood Field Office, Coos Bay District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has analyzed two alternatives: a No Action alternative and a Proposed Action alternative. Scoping by the Interdisciplinary Team identified two issues to be analyzed in the environmental assessment. They are (as identified on page 2 of the EA):

1. Hardwood species occupying productive sites in GFMA land allocations that are suitable for establishment and growth of commercial conifer.
2. Sediment delivery to the stream network.

The analysis area encompasses all or portions of the North Fork Chetco Subwatershed (6<sup>th</sup> field), a Tier 1 key watershed which is part of the Chetco River Watershed (5<sup>th</sup> field) and the South Fork Pistol Subwatershed (6<sup>th</sup> field) that is part of the Pistol River 5<sup>th</sup> field. The Proposed Action alternative proposes to slash and broadcast burn 20 units of tanoak dominated stands and plant Douglas-fir on approximately 322 acres, provide for firewood or specialty markets on a limited basis, construct 0.6 miles of new road, and renovate 0.6 miles of existing roads. Approximately 54 acres of the proposed treatments are within Riparian Reserves. The No Action alternative would defer action on the forest stands proposed for treatment. The project areas analyzed in the EA are located within the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocation in Sections 5, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 29 of T.39S. R.13W, Willamette Meridian and Sections 16, 17, 19, and 20 of T.40S., R.13W., Willamette Meridian.

### **II. Background**

The Coos Bay District of the BLM is under the direction of the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and its Record of Decision (ROD) (BLM, 1995). The RMP and its ROD are in conformance with the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat

for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the range of the Northern Spotted Owl and its ROD (Northwest Forest Plan [NFP]) (Interagency, 1994). Through these documents, the BLM, in conjunction with other federal land agencies, is directed to conduct watershed analysis (WA), and to implement restoration projects to aid in the recovery of water quality and aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial habitats.

As stated in the ROD for the NFP, the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) was developed to maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems on public lands within the range of Pacific Ocean anadromy. Section 4.5.2.5 of the EA contains an analysis of the consistency of the alternatives with the ACS and is summarized in Appendix C of the EA.

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).

### **III. Rationale**

The estimated environmental effects of each of the alternatives contained in this EA are based on research, professional judgment and experience of the Interdisciplinary Team. No significant impacts from any alternatives are expected on the following elements of the human environment: (1) Air Quality, (2) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, (3) Cultural Resource Values, (4) Prime or Unique Farmland, (5) Flood Plains, (6) Native American Religious Concerns and/or Indian trust resources, (7) Hazardous Materials/Solid Waste, (8) Threatened or Endangered Species, (9) Water Quality, (10) Wetlands and Riparian Zones, (11) Wild and Scenic Rivers, (12) Wilderness Values, (13) Noxious Weeds, (14) Port-Orford-Cedar Management, (15) Environmental Justice, (16) Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives, (17) Energy Production, Transmission, or Conservation, (18) Public Health or Safety, or (19) Irreversible or Irrecoverable Resource Commitments.

The proposed activities will not affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places.

The No Action alternative is expected to maintain the existing developmental trajectory of Riparian Reserve and upland stands that were identified and recommended for treatment. This alternative would not have any significant impacts beyond those identified in the RMP, however, deferring conversion treatments at this time may reduce the potential of stands to contribute to the ASQ, preclude the attainment of some Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives, and limit the development of desired stand characteristics associated with Riparian Reserves. This in itself would not have any significant impacts beyond those already identified in the RMP.

The Proposed Action alternative would incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in the RMP along with design features outlined in the EA. Design features incorporated to mitigate potential impacts to wildlife, soils, and streams would include: no-treatment buffers along streams and ephemeral drainages associated with the

treatment units, structural diversity tree retention, spring burning of most units, and controlled ignition to ensure low severity burning. The proposed treatments are not national or regional in scope. The proposed treatments would meet the objectives outlined in the RMP, ACS, and the EA. Incorporating the BMPs and design features for this alternative would reduce any impacts well below the level of significance.

The effects of the quality of the human environment of the proposed treatments are not highly controversial. The possible effects of the proposed action on the quality of human environment are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risk. The proposed actions do not establish a precedent for actions with future significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

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

Analysis by the fisheries biologist has concluded that the proposed actions constitute a "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" determination to listed fisheries species and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The Biological Assessment for this project has been submitted to NOAA Fisheries. All correspondence from NOAA Fisheries will be available for review at the Coos Bay District Office.

The project has been designed to minimize disturbance effects on federally listed threatened and endangered wildlife species by incorporating the appropriate Project Design Criteria from the Coos Bay District FY2003-2008 Biological Assessment C02-02 and its resultant US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion (in press).

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

#### **IV. Determination**

On the basis of information contained in the Curry Hardwood Conversions EA (Section 4.0, Environmental Consequences), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that none of the alternatives constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this analysis area.

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Date