



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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1792
EA OR125-00-22

Decision Documentation For Middle Creek CTs EA OR125-00-22

Background:

The Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, using input from District resource staff and the public input, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Middle Creek CTs. There is a No Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. The Action Alternative proposes to thin approximately 237 acres, convert about 42 acres of alder, construct 0.6 miles of new road, renovate or improve 7.4 miles of road, and decommission 2.7 miles of road. The project areas analyzed in the EA are located within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) land use allocation in Sections 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 of T. 27 S., R. 11 W, Willamette Meridian.

Management objectives are to:

1. Improve General Forest Management Area (GFMA) stand structure by thinning out excess trees in dense stands to enhance the growth and vigor of the residual trees to provide larger and healthier trees for future management objectives.
2. Improve GFMA stand composition by converting red alder stands to conifer through regeneration harvest silviculture.
3. Improve Riparian Reserve stand structure by thinning (density management) excess trees to enhance the growth and vigor of the residual trees.
4. Restore Riparian Reserve conifer habitat by converting red alder stands in the RR to conifer stands through regeneration harvest silviculture.
5. Maintain dispersal habitat in conifer stands that currently function as northern spotted owl dispersal habitat.

6. Work towards the goals in the Middle Creek Transportation Management Objectives (TMO) by decommissioning roads which don't contribute to continued resource management. At a minimum there would be no net increase of permanent roads in the Cherry Creek Tier 1 drainage.
7. Redirect the trajectory of stands inside the RR so they would develop characteristics consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.
8. Develop economically feasible timber sales for removing wood products that would fund the treatments, help meet consumer demand for wood products, and help support the economy.
9. Provide for habitat restoration projects where appropriate and within the scope of BLM regulatory authority.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as it applies to the seven units described as the Middle Creek CTs. The Proposed Action of EA OR125-00-22, that analyzed the environmental effects of the Middle Creek CTs and the Design Features described in the EA, is hereby adopted.

The following EA estimates have been changed to reflect field verification:

Sale Name	No. of Units	EA Est. Thinning Acres	Actual Thinning Acres	EA Est. Restoration Acres	Actual Restoration Acres	EA Est New Road Miles	Actual New Road Miles
Old Man's Road CT	2	128	114	12	12	0.3	0.3
Cherry Creek CT (incl. Cherry 27 CT)	5	109	109	30	30	0.3	0.2
Totals	7	237	223	42	42	0.6	0.5

The Proposed Action, to thin 237 acres, has been reduced to 223 acres.

The Proposed Action, to construct 0.6 miles of new road, has been reduced to 0.5 miles.

The design features will be implemented as described in the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan* and its *Record of Decision (RMP)* (BLM, May 1995) which conforms 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* (Northwest Forest Plan) and its *Record of Decision (ROD)* (Interagency, 1994).

The proposed activities that may affect listed species within the project area were submitted for consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with Section 7(A)(4) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 [16 U.S.C. 1536(A)(2) and (A)(4) as amended]. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion (BO Ref. #1-15-00-F-629) dated, September 29, 2000, and a Letter of Concurrence #1-15-01-I-278 for initiation of consultation on April 5, 2002.

Based on analysis by the Fisheries Biologist, it has been concluded that the proposed actions constitute a “no effect” to listed fish species and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Therefore, consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not warranted.

Rationale:

The Proposed Action is the alternative that most closely meets the intent of the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan by restoring desired forest stand conditions in the General Forest Management Area and Riparian Reserve land use allocations. This action does not prevent or retard the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.

The decision is consistent with the ROD for the *Northwest Forest Plan and the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*.

Administrative Remedies:

In accordance with *Forest Management Regulations* at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be subject to formal protest until the *Notice of Sale* is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located." For this project, the *Notice of Sale* will be published in *The World* newspaper on August 29, 2002.

Decision recommended by:

NRSA: /s/ Kathy Wall _____ Date: 8-22-02 _____
Kathy Wall

NRSA: /s/ Ralph L. Thomas _____ Date: 8-22-02 _____
Ralph Thomas

NRSA: /s/ Tim Barnes, Acting _____ Date: 8-22-02 _____
Steve Fowler

Decision Approved by:

/s/ M. Elaine Raper _____
M. Elaine Raper
Umpqua Field Manager

8-23-02 _____
Date

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