



IN REPLY REFER TO

# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE  
1300 AIRPORT LANE  
NORTH BEND, OREGON 97459-2000

## DECISION DOCUMENTATION for Sandy-Remote Analysis Area EA No. OR128-96-21

### Background

An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Sandy-Remote Analysis Area were prepared by the Myrtlewood Resource Area, Coos Bay District and announced to the public on November 8, 1996. The analysis area is approximately 30 miles southeast of Coos Bay, Oregon near the town of Remote. It includes the Sandy Creek and Remote Subwatersheds that are tributary to Middle Fork Coquille River. The total analysis area is 23,982 acres in size. BLM manages 43% of the analysis area and is the sole federal land manager. The proposed harvest activities are located in T.28S., R. 10W., Secs. 34 and 35; T.29S., R. 10W., Secs. 1, 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, and 28; T.29S., R. 11 W., Sec. 25; T.30S., R.10W., Secs. 5, 6, and 7; Willamette Meridian of Coos County.

The EA is tiered to the *Final - Coos Bay District Proposed Resource Management Plan and EIS*, (FPRMP, BLM, 1994), which is in conformance with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for the Late Successional and Old Growth forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its Record of Decision (ROD), (Northwest Forest Plan, Interagency, 1994).

Formal consultation under Section 7(A)(4) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 [16 U.S.C. 1563 (a)(2) and (a)(4) as amended] was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where it was determined that the action alternatives would not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species and that these alternatives are in compliance with the Act. The estimated environmental effects contained in this EA are based on research, professional judgement and experience of the Interdisciplinary Team. No significant adverse impacts are expected to (1) Threatened or Endangered Species, (2) Floodplains or Wetlands/Riparian zones, (3) Wilderness Values, (4) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, (5) Cultural Resources, (6) Prime or Unique Farmland, (7) Wild and Scenic Rivers, (8) Air Quality, (9) Native American Religious Concerns, **(10)** Hazardous Materials/Solid Waste, (11) Water Quality, (12) Sensitive Plants or, (13) Survey and Manage Species.

The general public was informed of the planned EA through letters (July 11, 1996) to those on the Resource Area's mailing list, which included adjacent landowners and public requesting timber sale EAs, and to those receiving the District's *Planning Update* (April 26, 1996). Two public responses were received. The public was informed of the EA and FONSI through letters (November 6, 1996) to those on the Resource Area's mailing list and through a published Legal Notice in *The World* newspaper (November 8, 1996).

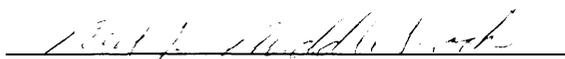
**Decision**

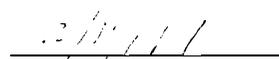
I have decided to proceed with Alternative II- Proposed Action of the Sandy-Remote Analysis Area EA. This alternative includes an estimated 628 acres of regeneration harvest, 133 acres of commercial thinning, and 6 acres of red alder conversion, all in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA). This alternative would produce approximately 31,500 thousand board feet of timber. Planned harvest systems include ground-based, skyline, and helicopter yarding. The proposed projects would include the construction of an estimated 4 miles of road (which would subsequently be decommissioned or fully decommissioned), 30.3 miles of road renovation, and .9 miles of road improvement. Road closure recommendations, as defined in the EA, would close 8.4 miles of existing roads. This alternative would adjust Riparian Reserve boundaries on intermittent streams adjacent to (or included within) some of the proposed units. The adjustments meet the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives. No further Riparian Reserve adjustments would be considered in this analysis area without additional data, refined protocols, another iteration of the Watershed Analysis, and associated NEPA documentation. There would be approximately twenty-four regeneration harvest units (including the red alder conversion) and five commercial thinning units. The proposed projects would be accomplished through multiple timber sales contracts expected to be sold in fiscal years 1997, 1998, or 1999.

**Rational For Decision**

I am choosing Alternative II- Proposed Action for the following reasons: This alternative best meets the goals and addresses the opportunities outlined in the Sandy-Remote Analysis Area EA. This alternative minimizes impacts of fragmentation, reduces road densities, improves snag/down log availability, and contributes to the Probable Sale Quantity (PSQ) for Myrtlewood Resource Area. These are some of the key indicators for the issues identified in the EA. Alternative I - No Action, would not contribute to the PSQ or help reduce the road densities in the analysis area. Alternative III - Full Interim Riparian Reserves, would increase the amount of edge in non-fragmented stands by harvesting three more units than Alternative II.

In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for these timber sales will not become effective until the Notice of Sale is published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by decision are located. For these projects, the Notice of Sale will be published in The *World* newspaper.

  
NEAL R. MIDDLEBROOK  
Area Manager  
Myrtlewood Resource Area

  
Date