ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
EA : OR-128-01-03

Proposal to amend Reciprocal Right-of-Way and Road Use Agreement C-599 to allow the permittee to construct new road where crossing rights do not presently exist.

Proposed this 30th day of June , 2002

This action is subject to and in conformance with the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan, with its *Record of Decision* (BLM 1995), and 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* with its *Record of Decision* and *Standards and Guidelines* (Interagency, 1994).

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Section I - Purpose of and Need for Action

Purpose

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), on March 28th, 1978 entered into Right-of-Way and Road Use Agreement C-599 (RWA) with Menasha Corporation. The purpose of this agreement was to enable each party to access their lands for the management and removal of timber. The intent of this project is to consider amending the RWA to include the metes-and-bounds crossing plat submitted by Menasha. Should this request be denied the permittee has stated that they will utilize their existing rights to reconstruct Road No. 28-10-5.0B-D across BLM managed lands in the NW¼ of Section 5, T.28S., R.10W. and the NE¼SW¼ and SE¼NW¼ of Section 32, T.27S., R.10W. Menasha originally made this request in April, 2000. Since then a land exchange was considered but the proposal eventually fell through.

The purpose of the environmental assessment is to:

> Assess any potential environmental impacts that may result if the No Action or Proposed Action is implemented, identify appropriate mitigation measures, and document the decision making process.

Additional specialist reports and analysis documents are contained in the analysis file and hereby incorporated by reference.

Need

The permittee has requested access to their land in Section 32, T.27S., R.10W. They want this access to harvest and transport their timber to market. The private timber is approximately 50 years of age and contains Douglas-fir, hemlock, and alder.

The goals of the proposed action are to:

> Allow permittee to construct a predominately ridge top road rather than reconstruct existing road across and adjacent to China Creek.
>
> Select the most advantages route which impacts resources on the ground in the least detrimental fashion.

Identified Issues and Resolutions

The following issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team (IDT) assigned to analyze the proposed project.

Issue 1: **There are several stands of suitable murrelet habitat within 0.25 miles of the road construction activities and private harvest units. One of these stands was surveyed 1993-1995 (murrelets present no occupancy). Given that murrelets were detected during surveys to one of the habitat stands and the high quality of the habitat, murrelets likely occupy some of the suitable habitat with 0.25 miles of the proposed project.**

Resolution: **The permittee has voluntarily agreed to implement seasonal and timing restrictions for murrelets**

Issue 2: **Use of the existing roads in the winter months may affect the aquatic environment adjacent to the road.**

Resolution: **As with previous use of this road by the permittee, they have agreed to use sediment control devices along the haul route.**

SECTION II - ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

No Action Alternative

Description

Should the government deny the request, the applicant has stated they will modify their harvest plan and proceed as follows: They will request to utilize their rights under Right-Of-Way and Road Use Agreement C-599 (RWA), and reconstruct Road No. 28-10-5.0 B-D. The government has limited discretion in the use of this old road as the permittee was given the right to use this road under the RWA in 1978. Reconstruction of this road would necessitate construction of a bridge capable of timber haul across China Creek or the installation of a large culvert. In addition, approximately 1.27 miles of old logging road, with 8 intermittent stream crossings would be reconstructed. Approximately one mile of this reconstruction would be on BLM managed land. To cross back over China Creek on the upper end of the watershed an additional bridge or culvert would have to be installed once leaving BLM managed lands. Use of this road would also require that the harvest units would be logged down hill. Use of this road could be denied if it was determined that the road did not constitute the most reasonable direct route into the area or the reconstruction of the road would result in excessive erosion to the lands of the government. (See map in Appendix I)

Proposed Action

Description

The purpose of this proposed action is to facilitate the applicant in logging approximately 120 acres of their land using best management harvest methods. The applicant has requested the use of BLM controlled Road No. 28-10-5.1B, (0.15 miles), where the present road crosses through Section 33, T.27S., R.10W. In addition, they have requested to construct approximately 2380 feet of new road across BLM managed land in the SW¼ of Section 33, T.27S., R.10W. Under this plan, the applicant will be constructing an additional 1300 feet of new road on their lands.

The applicant plans to surface Road No. 28-10-5.1B and the newly constructed road with an eight inch lift of rock. This will enable them to harvest their timber in the winter months as there are murrelet habitat restrictions because the road construction and harvest unit are within 0.25 miles of high quality suitable habitat. All vehicles will be washed prior to initial entry to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. The permittee will not start road construction until after the 6th of August and will implement daily timing restrictions until the 15th of September. All cut and fill slopes and disposal sites will be seeded with native grass seed, fertilized, and mulched in accordance with BLM's standard specifications. The road will remain open after the completion of harvest activities for future management actions. The harvest of the 50 year old conifers and scattered hardwoods is planned to be accomplished with a skyline system capable of at least one-end suspension. If during the harvest operation, the ground is already saturated from winter rains and more than two inches of precipitation

is predicted in the project area over the next 24 hours, then winter haul will be suspended. Operations may resume after the 24 hour suspension, except when another storm (exceeding two inches) is forecasted. In addition, the applicant shall install sediment control devices in the ditchline along the haul route. (See map in Appendix I)

SECTION III - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the environmental components that may be affected by the Proposed Action or the No Action in the Alternative being analyzed. This section does not address the environmental consequences, but rather acts as the baseline for comparisons in Section IV - Environmental Consequences.

Project Location Area

The project area is located approximately 12 miles northeast of Myrtle Point, Oregon within the East Fork Coquille 5th Field Watershed, within the China Creek drainage. The action area would be within T.27S., R.10W., Section 33 on BLM lands.

Wildlife, Including T & E Species

Northern spotted owls
There is an owl site ≥ 0.25 mile from the edge of the private harvest unit and it is ≥ 0.29 mile from the proposed new road construction.

Marbled murrelets
There are several stands of suitable murrelet habitat within 0.25 mile of the road activities and private harvest unit. One of these stands was surveyed 1993-1995 (murrelet presence but no occupancy). The habitat is within 0.25 mile of the road construction and is adjacent to the haul route and harvest unit. The nearest known occupied site is about 1.75 mile away.

Special Status Species: No other special status species are known or suspected to use the project area.

Survey and Manage: There is no suitable habitat for red tree voles on the proposed road location.

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries, Including T & E Species

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries
The nearest fish bearing stream to the proposed project is China Creek. China Creek is a tributary to the East Fork Coquille River. Fish species that utilize China Creek include coho salmon, chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and resident cutthroat trout. Coho salmon, chinook salmon, and steelhead trout are limited to the lower portions (one mile) of China Creek, due to stream gradient. The action area is just over one mile above coho and steelhead distribution, critical habitat, essential fish habitat, and approximately 0.8 miles above cutthroat habitat.

Project Site Description
There is one second order stream crossing on the proposed road construction on BLM administered lands. The haul route does occur within the Riparian Reserve of China Creek. (See Hydrology Site Description for further detail).

Hydrology

Dora is a 4,826 (7.5 mi^2) acre drainage in the Lower East Fork Coquille Watershed and includes China Creek. China Creek is a steep cascading stream with step/pool features that are constrained by hillslopes. It is 5th order in size and 1574 acres in size (2.46 $mi^{2.}$). A high proportion (>25%) of the bed material in depositional areas in China Creek is fine sediment (<2mm). Turbidities in the drainage normally exceed 100 Nephelometric Turbidity Units during storms (EFCWA, 2000). The one stream being crossed on BLM land under the proposed action is a second order, tributary to China Creek which drains approximately 24 acres of moderate topography (up to 35%) above the road.

The area receives 80-100 inches of precipitation annually. Streamflows rise quickly during storms and recede at a moderate rate as storms pass. The area is below the snow accumulation zone.

Soils

Within Sections 32 and 33 there are three different soil map units. An Umpcoos-Rock Outcrop association on 70-99 percent slopes (58F), a Preacher-Bohannon loam on 60 to 90 percent slopes (46F) and a Milbury-Bohannon-Umpcoos association (38F) on 50-80% slopes. The proposed route for the new road construction crosses the 46F and 58F units whereas the alternative route to the west of China Creek is solely on the 38F unit.

The limitations for the 46F unit are susceptibility of the surface layer to compaction, the steepness of the slopes, the hazard of erosion, and plant competition. The limitations of the 38F unit are the steepness of slope, the hazard of erosion, the hazard of windthrow, seedling mortality, and plant competition. The 58F unit has limitations from slopes that are steep, hazard of erosion, seedling mortality, hazard of windthrow and plant competition much like the 38F unit.

Vegetation, Including T & E Species

There are no known sites of Special Status or Survey and Manage species in the project area.

Geology

The project areas are located in the Tyee sedimentary basin. The stratigraphies include members of the Tyee Formation. The Baughman Member of the Tyee Formation consists of massive sandstone interbedded with lesser amounts of siltstone, mudstone, carbonaceous shale and coal. The underlying Hubbard Creek Member consists of mudstone interbedded with siltstone and lesser amounts of fine-to medium-grained thin-bedded sandstone. Carbonized plant debris and mica deposits are abundant along bedding planes. This, in turn, overlies the Tyee Mountain Member, which consists of massive sandstone with minor siltstone, mudstone, mud-chip conglomerate, and rare pebbly sandstone and pebble conglomerate.

Hazardous Material/Solid Wastes

Proposed sites have been examined for environmental concerns; none have been observed (Level 1 Contaminant Survey dated 7-5-2002). Subsequent discoveries will be handled under provisions of Coos Bay District Hazardous Materials Contingency Plan.

Cultural Resources

Review of project documentation and records check shows no know cultural resources in the vicinity of the new road location or the existing road.

Port-Orford cedar

There is no Port-Orford cedar present along the haul route nor in any stands of timber in the project area.

Noxious Weeds

There are no noxious weeds along the road system or on the proposed road location. To prevent the introduction of noxious weeds all equipment and vehicles shall be washed prior to entering the area.

Environmental Justice

The proposed actions under consideration are not expected to disproportionately affect protected groups. (i.e. Native Americans, minorities, and low-income populations).

Energy Exploration, Development, Distribution, and Conservation

A review of the proposed project has been completed for potential adverse energy impacts. This has been completed to satisfy and in accordance with Bureau of Land Management Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2002-037. All decisions are to be reviewed to determine if they impact energy resources on or across BLM lands in terms of access, exploration, development, transportation, and/or production. Energy resources include oil and gas, geothermal, coal, wind, hydroelectric, and fissionable resources.

SECTION IV - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Critical Element Evaluation of Each Alternative

This section describes the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of the alternatives, and the probable consequences as they relate to the alternatives. The environmental consequences to critical elements of the elements of the human environment are outlined in the Table 1 below.

Table 1 : Environmental consequences to the critical elements of the human environment

Critical Element of the Human Environment	Present in the Project Area	Affected by No Action	Affected by the Proposed Action
Air Quality	No	No	No
Area of Critical Environmental Concern	No	No	No
Cultural Resources	No	No	No
Farm Lands	No	No	No
Flood Plain	Yes	Yes	No
Native American Religious Concerns	No	No	No
Noxious Weeds	No	maybe	maybe
Port Orford Cedar Management	No	No	No
Threatened & Endangered Species (Wildlife)	Yes	No	No
Threatened & Endangered Species (Fisheries)	Yes	Yes	No
Threatened and Endangered Species (Botanical)	No	No	No
Wastes; Solid or Hazardous	No	No	No
Water Quality; Drinking Water	No	No	No
Wetlands/Riparian Reserves	Yes	Yes(F&P)	Yes(F&P)
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	No	No
Wilderness	No	No	No
Environmental Justice	No	No	No
Energy Exploration	No	No	No

P=Private Land
F=Federal Land

The BLM considers the harvest of timber on private land an interrelated but not interdependent action. The harvest is not interdependent as there is an alternate route for hauling that can be utilized through a reciprocal right-of-way agreement. It is evident based on conversations with the applicant that the private unit will be harvested. The private harvest is interrelated because the BLM road would provide access and a hauling route for the private timber. The harvest will result in the loss of dispersal habitat on private land.

No Action

Wildlife, Including T & E Species

Direct and Indirect Effects
The company does have the option to access their land through an alternate route that is covered under a nondiscretionary reciprocal right of way agreement. This is nondiscretionary and exempt from Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Northern spotted owls
The harvest of the private timber will remove marginal owl dispersal habitat but would not affect suitable habitat. Dispersal conditions for spotted owls in the fifth field watershed appear adequate to accommodate movements of owls between LSRs. Approximately 58% of the federally managed land in the watershed provides dispersal habitat (47% across all ownerships). Thomas et al (1990) suggested 50% of federal ownership should provide dispersal habitat in order to allow movements between large reserve areas.

Marbled murrelets
Given that murrelets were detected during surveys to one of the habitat stands and the high quality of the habitat, murrelets likely occupy some of the suitable habitat within 0.25 mile of the proposed project. There is a chance if the permittee does reconstruct the old road it may not get rocked. This would necessitate a summer harvest that may affect Marbled murrelets.

Cumulative Effects
There will be increased open road densities in the watershed if Road No. 28-10-5.0 B-D road is reopened and renovated. This road is approximately 1.27 miles in length compared with the 0.7 miles of new road under the proposed action.

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries, Including T & E Species

Direct and Indirect Effects: Menasha Corporation's request to cross BLM managed land in T27S-10W-33 would be denied under the No Action Alternative. As a result, the renovation and road construction in Section 33 would not occur at this time. It is likely that under this alternative, a portion of Road No.28-10-5.1B (0.28 miles) would eventually be decommissioned, as recommended in the East Fork Coquille Watershed Analysis (Appendix J-6).

If the No Action Alternative were selected, Menasha may exercise their rights to reconstruct 1.27 miles of Road No. 28-10-5.0B-D through BLM managed land in T28S-R10W-5 and T27S-R10W-32 to access their harvest units. This route is covered by an existing Reciprocal Right-of-Way Agreement, under which BLM has limited discretion. This route would involve reconstruction over eight stream crossings, a bridge over China Creek, and construction within the floodplain. Although re-constructing this road would improve existing rill erosion occurring on the road in the short term, the long term impacts of re-constructing this road would likely be significant for aquatic and riparian habitat. Reconstruction of the road over China Creek and over eight tributaries, and possibly a second bridge would likely increase erosion and sediment delivery over

time from construction within the riparian zone and floodplain, new road construction and road related runoff. This alternative would not likely meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives as outlined in the Coos Bay RMP/ROD.

Cumulative Effects
Cumulative effects are impacts on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (Federal or non-Federal). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. In general, the historic condition of aquatic habitat within the East Fork Coquille watershed has been documented as having abundant large wood in streams, and abundant beaver activity (EF Coquille WA, 2000). The effects of human activities on aquatic and riparian habitat are primarily from timber harvest, splash dams and log drives, and the construction of extensive riparian road networks. These activities have resulted in reduced large wood and shading, reduced instream complexity, and an increase in sediment and aquatic passage barriers, as a result of culverts along roads (EF Coquille WA, 2000).

Presently, the aquatic and riparian condition of the China Creek watershed has improved (culvert replacement projects and from natural processes such as succession) since these habitat modifications have occurred. However, the aquatic and riparian condition has not been restored to historic conditions (see EF Coquille WA, 2000 for a description of current conditions).

Projects that may occur within the foreseeable future include the no action alternative (as described above). Additionally, the BLM may issue a permit (RWA C-344) to Plum Creek Timberlands LP, which would permit the applicant to improve a dirt road with crushed hard rock and ditch relief culverts across BLM managed land. This action would occur along the Brummet Creek Road and Brewster Ridge (T. 27 S., R. 10 W., Section 33). The action would occur approximately six miles above anadromous fish habitat. Cumulatively, these projects would have impacts on the aquatic and riparian habitat within the China Creek drainage from new road construction within the riparian reserve (alternate routes) and timber harvest along strems.

Hydrology

Direct and Indirect Effects
The no action alternative will force the permittee to reopen Road No. 28-10-5.0B-D. Use of this route would entail installing a bridge or large culvert across China Creek and reconstructing 0.7 miles of old road across BLM lands in the NW¼ of Section 5 and reconstructing an additional 0.5 miles of road across private and federal land in Section 32. This would entail installing at least 8 culverts and possibly a second bridge on the old road system.

Impacts from this action would involve small-moderate increases in short-term and possible long-term turbidity/sediment delivery to China Creek, as well as decreased riparian shade due to brushing and felling of roadside vegetation in proximity to the stream channels. Changes in subsurface flow and possible faster runoff due to road reconstruction would contribute direct and indirect effects to China Creek.

Cumulative Effects
Same as direct and indirect affects.

Vegetation, Including T & E Species

Direct and Indirect Effects
The reconstruction is unlikely to affect potential habitat of Special Status or Survey and Manage species, as the road is already in place.

Cumulative Effects None

Soils

Direct and Indirect Effects
Rebuilding the road grade and possible surfacing to the 5.0 road would occur on a previously constructed full bench road that is located on a Milbury-Bohannon-Umpcoos association soil map unit on 50 to 80% slopes. Correcting the drainage of currently diverted streams back to their original stream courses may induce a load of fine stored sediment into China creek. Correcting the altered water velocity situation from the current streams may reduce the sediment delivery from those creeks. Overall the system would come into balance with less water per stream delivering only a small amount of sediment. Building two crossings over China Creek itself and hauling on new gravel surface in the winter past 8 stream crossings will deliver fine sediment into the creek (Luce and Black 1999 and 2001).

To accomplish the harvest of the proposed unit, Menasha will have to downhill log to a landing either west or north of the unit. Portions of the unit will not be reachable from either of those landings and harvest will have to be foregone. The downhill yarding situation will not allow the timber to be suspended as recommended for these soils. The gouging of the hillside by the logs will develop a network of skid trails that point directly to China Creek and deliver fine sediment for the next three to five years. The disturbance factor on these trails would be high thus the expected impact would also be severe. These skid trails would also have reduced growing capacity in the future and could initiate landslide failures on areas where rock is close to the surface. Due to the characteristics of the soil types in the proposed harvest units, total suspension of logs is recommended on the 38F and 58F units. The 46F unit could be protected by use of Hi-lead or one-end suspension of material removed.

Cumulative Effects
There may be short term cumulative impacts to the aquatic system from downstream sediment delivery from the downhill yarding, culvert placements and road reconstruction activities. If above normal precipitation occurs after reconstruction, sediment delivery to streams would be accelerated and impacts to downstream water quality and the aquatic system will ensue. Long term cumulative impacts could be the reduced capacity of the soil to grow Doug-fir at the current rate, brush species will invade and be more competitive for soil moisture, light and nutrients on degraded skid trails.

Geology

Direct and Indirect Impacts
This alternative would have minimal direct and indirect impacts on existing geologic conditions. Continued development of the natural system would not impact the underlying stratigraphy except in the aspects of geologic time. Geomorphology of the area will continue to be impacted by the present influences, which include minor and major mass movements. No action would include the use of the existing road system. This system appears to be geotechnically stable and, therefore, would have no impact.

Cumulative Impacts
This alternative would have minimal cumulative impacts on existing geologic conditions. Continued development of the natural system would not impact the underlying stratigraphy except in the aspects of geologic time. Geomorphology of the area will continue to be impacted by the present influences, which would include minor and major mass movements. Associated hazards of the Tyee Formations, and those similar in lithology, include: rapid erosion, flash flooding, rapid mass movement, and stream bank erosion. The type of failure is determined by steepness of slope, angle of stratigraphy dip, combination of stratigraphy type, moisture, and disturbance (Beaulieu, 1975; Wiley, 1995).

Hazardous Materials

There are no environmental consequences for hazardous material or solid waste under the No Action Alternative.

Cultural Resources

The reconstruction of the existing road has no probability of disturbing cultural resources because the current road surface is not the original ground surface.

Port-Orford Cedar

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects
No affect as there is no Port-Orford cedar in the area.

Noxious Weeds

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects
Under this alternative the potential for increased spread of noxious weed populations exists, as a result of the road reconstruction activities which would occur under this alternative. The disturbed soils from road building can potentially provide prime habitat for noxious weed invasion. Vehicle washing requirements should help prevent the introduction/spread of additional noxious weeds.

Environmental Justice

No affect.

Energy Exploration, Development, and transportation

No affect.

Wildlife, Including T & E Species

Northern spotted owls
The road construction and private harvest unit would remove marginal owl dispersal habitat but would not affect suitable habitat. The China Creek owl site is ≥ 0.25 mile from the edge of the pvt harvest unit and is ≥ 0.29 mile from the new road construction. Analysis of dispersal data for spotted owls suggests that LSRs in southwest Oregon are currently well connected to each other despite ongoing management activities (Forsman et al, in press).

Marbled murrelets
There are several stands of suitable murrelet habitat within 0.25 mile of the road activities and private harvest unit. One of these stands was surveyed 1993-1995 (murrelet presence but no occupancy). The habitat is within 0.25 mile of the road construction and is adjacent to the haul route and harvest unit. The nearest occupied site is about 1.75 mile away. Given that murrelets were detected during surveys to one of the habitat stands and the high quality of the habitat, murrelets likely occupy some of the suitable habitat within 0.25 mile of the proposed project. No suitable habitat will be removed under the proposed action across BLM managed land.

S&M species
See separate section below

Migratory birds
Guidance for managing migratory birds on BLM lands and BLM projects is being developed. No surveys have been conducted in the area for migratory birds and none are known to be nesting in the project area on either the BLM-administered land or the private land. Timber harvest and ROW clearing are proposed for fall and winter which is outside the nesting season for migratory birds. Young migratory birds fledge from nests May - August.

Special status species (other than those discussed above)
No other special status animal species are known or suspected to use the project area.

ESA Compliance:
Since Menasha has agreed to implement seasonal and timing restrictions for murrelets, and because dispersal habitat conditions appear adequate for spotted owls, the project is covered by an existing consultation (1-15-99-I-304).

S&M Compliance:
The project would not affect suitable habitat for red tree voles. Other S&M wildlife species don't require pre-project surveys.

Recommendations:
In order to comply with the existing consultation and obviate the need for a new consultation, seasonal and timing restrictions must be implemented for the road construction, haul, and private harvest within 0.25 mile of suitable murrelet habitat (i.e. no activities 1 Apr - 5 Aug, daily timing restrictions 6 Aug - 15 Sep).

Cumulative Effects
Open road density in the watershed will be reduced by approximately 0.57 miles under the proposed action.

Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries /Riparian Zones Including T & E and S&M Species:

Direct and Indirect Effects (Federal land)
The proposed road construction on BLM managed land would include approximately 1000 feet of mid-slope road construction on slopes with over 60% gradient in areas. The proposed route would include crossing one second order intermittent stream channel. A heavy gauge 36 inch culvert and between 15-20 feet of fill would be placed at the stream crossing. Additionally, approximately 800-900 cubic yards of fill would be placed within the riparian reserve of an intermittent stream crossing. Trees within the riparian reserve that would be cut for the road construction include smaller alder and Douglas-fir.

The proposed road construction may result in sediment delivery to the intermittent second order stream channel the road would cross. However, several conservation measures could be implemented to minimize these effects including 1) constructing the road during the summer dry season, when the second order stream will be dry, 2) end hauling all excess fill material to a landing outside the riparian reserve, 3) installing sediment barriers within the stream channel during construction, and 4) construction of water bars to minimize road related sediment delivery. New road construction will include mid-slope and full bench construction on steep side slopes. However, if the road were to fail or increase erosion, it would likely be "caught" and settle out on a bench below the action area, before entering any stream channel.

Indirect Effects from Interrelated and Interdependent Actions (Private Land):
Menasha has requested access to their land to harvest a 120 acre unit. According to their application, Menasha intends to regeneration harvest 50 acres and regeneration harvest or commercially thin the remainder. The age class of the timber to be harvested is a mixture of 50 year old conifers and scattered hardwoods. The harvest is planned to be accomplished with a skyline system capable of at least one-end suspension. Based on information in the application and GIS coverage of the project area, riparian harvest would remove trees from about 0.5-0.7 miles of headwaters second to third order stream. The southwest corner of the harvest unit is adjacent to cutthroat trout habitat and less than 0.4 miles upstream of the nearest coho salmon and steelhead habitat. The applicant will also be constructing approximately 1300 feet of ridge top road on their lands. The harvest would also result in the removal of trees to within 70 feet of a perennial, fish bearing stream, and along extensive non fish-bearing reaches upstream. This would substantially reduce the large woody debris recruitment from the riparian area. A reduction in large wood recruitment can lead to a loss of instream cover and pool habitat available for fish, and decrease retention of spawning gravels used by salmonids.

Cumulative Effects
Cumulative effects are impacts on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (Federal or non-Federal). Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. In general, the historic condition of aquatic habitats within the East Fork Coquille watershed has been documented as having abundant large wood in streams, and abundant beaver activity (EF Coquille WA, 2000). The effects of human activities on aquatic and riparian habitat are primarily from timber harvest, splash dams and log drives, and the construction of extensive riparian road networks. These activities have resulted in reduced large wood and shading, reduced instream complexity, and an increase in sediment and aquatic passage barriers, as a result of culverts along roads (EF Coquille WA, 2000).

Presently, the aquatic and riparian condition of the China Creek watershed has improved (culvert replacement projects and from natural processes such as succession) since these habitat modifications have occurred. However, the aquatic and riparian condition has not been restored to historic conditions (see EF Coquille WA, 2000 for a description of current conditions).

Projects that may occur within the foreseeable future include the proposed action (as described above).

Additionally, the BLM may issue a permit (RWA C-344) to Plum Creek Timberlands LP, which would permit the applicant to improve a dirt road with crushed hard rock and ditch relief culverts across BLM managed land, in order to harvest 54 acres of private timberland. Cumulatively, the actions occurring on federal land, would not have significant impacts on the aquatic and riparian habitat within the China Creek drainage. However, the interrelated and interdependent portions of these actions could impact the China Creek drainage. Granting these permits would provide access to applicants and would result in the harvest of 174 acres (total) within the China Creek drainage along multiple fish bearing and headwater streams. Although the interrelated and interdependent portions of these actions may impact the aquatic and riparian habitat within China Creek, both applicants have alternate routes to access these lands, and so the action could occur without the federal permit. If the permit were denied, the alternative would be detrimental to the fisheries and aquatic resource (see No Action). Additionally, these alternate routes would have far more significant impact on the aquatic and riparian resource than the proposed route (see No Action descriptions). Therefore, the proposed action would have the least impact.

Endangered Species Act:
The National Marine Fisheries Service listed Oregon Coast (OC) coho salmon under the ESA as threatened on August 10, 1998 (63 FR 42587); and critical habitat for this species was designated on February 16, 2000 (65 FR 7764). OC steelhead were proposed as threatened under the ESA on August 9, 1996 (61 FR 41541), but found not warranted for listing on March 19, 1998 (63 FR 13347). OC steelhead are currently a candidate species. OC cutthroat trout are currently a candidate species (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Federal Action
May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect
The proposed road construction is approximately 1.1 miles from the nearest coho and steelhead habitat downstream. Any sediment delivered to the second order stream channel within the project area would not likely be mobilized since the stream will be dry during construction (and most of the year). If sediment were mobilized downstream of the project area, it would likely be diluted by mixing with flows from ten other tributaries before reaching cutthroat trout habitat, and eight more tributaries, including a fourth order fork of China Creek, before reaching coho and steelhead habitat. The removal of small alder and fir from the riparian reserve of these headwater streams, is not likely to significantly increase temperature to China Creek.

Interrelated/Interdependent Actions
May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect
The East Fork Coquille Watershed Analysis indicates that the watershed has unstable areas. However, the watershed analysis documented this for the watershed as a whole, not in site specific areas. Additionally, the applicant must follow all applicable Oregon State Forest Practices guidelines, which includes avoiding unstable areas. Therefore, it is unlikely that the harvest would create any landslides. The harvest will include the removal of trees to within 70 feet of a fish bearing stream and along several first and second order streams. According to the hydrology report a short term, sediment pulse could occur following the harvest, after winter burning. However, when these sediment pulses may occur, turbidity and sediment levels are normally elevated in the streams. These sediment pulses would not likely be significant, nor would it be easily detected above the background levels. Additionally, the streams within the harvest unit will mix with several other tributaries before entering the mainstem of China Creek. Additionally, overland flow is rare from harvest areas in the Coast Range and in this watershed (hydrologist report). Also documented in the hydrologist's report is that China Creek is a steep stream, and normal winter flows usually move any introduced sediment downstream quickly, and so it is not expected to accumulate to any extent in the substrate Although the harvest will occur along first and second order streams, these streams are likely to be dry during summer months, and therefore would not significantly contribute to stream temperature downstream.

The removal of trees along streams within the harvest unit will substantially reduce the large woody debris recruitment from the riparian area. A reduction of large wood recruitment can lead to a loss of instream cover

and pool habitat available for fish, and decrease retention of spawning gravels used by salmonids.

Essential Fish Habitat

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires Federal action agencies to consult with the Secretary of Commerce regarding any action or proposed action authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH) identified under the MSA. The NMFS has found that the existing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) environmental review process, including the Interagency Streamlined Consultation Procedure for Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (July, 1999), used by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for Federal Activities can be used to satisfy the EFH consultation requirements of the MSA.

As described above, the effects of the proposed action on federal land, if they occurred, would be transient, local, and of low intensity and would occur approximately one mile above salmonid habitat. Additionally, the conservation measures proposed as an integral part of the action would avoid, minimize, or otherwise offset potential adverse impacts to designated EFH (work in dry season, etc). In summary, the actions proposed on federal land would not adversely affect chinook or coho essential fish habitat.

Evaluation of Consistency with the Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines

There are no relevant Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for Right-of-Way Permits or interrelated/interdependent activities on private land associated with discretionary actions by federal agencies.

The proposed action is consistent with Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for road construction within Riparian Reserves (RF-1, RF-2, RF-3, RF-4, RF-5, RF-6, RF-7).

Evaluation of Consistency with ACS Objective Components

The proposed action will not prevent attainment of ACS objectives. See Table 1 of ACS Objectives.

Evaluation of Consistency with NMFS' March 18, 1997 Plan-level BO

Conservation Recommendations

A watershed analysis was completed for the East Fork Coquille River, and includes an assessment of the aquatic ecosystem. This meets the LRMP BO Conservation Recommendation 3, page 47. No other Conservation Recommendations specifically apply to Right-of-Way permits.

Reasonable and Prudent Measures

An interdisciplinary approach was used to complete the preparation and review of the EA for the proposed actions. The interdisciplinary review team used applicable criteria in the Northwest Forest Plan ROD to ensure the proposed actions are consistent with applicable Standards and Guidelines.

Reasonable and Prudent Measure 1 (p.63) - During the watershed analysis and NEPA (EA) preparation and review, the Interdisciplinary (ID) review team used applicable criteria in the Northwest Forest Plan ROD to ensure the proposed actions are fully consistent with applicable Standards and Guidelines and ACS objectives. This is consistent with Reasonable and Prudent Measure 1.

Reasonable and Prudent Measure 2 (p. 63) - The NMFS Checklist and Matrix or Pathways and Indicators was completed and the proposed project was submitted for informal consultation and will be reviewed by the Level I Team. This is consistent with Reasonable and Prudent Measure 2.

No other Reasonable and Prudent Measures specifically apply to Right-of-Way permits.

Terms and Conditions

Terms and Conditions 1 (p. 66) - The proposed actions are consistent with the NFP ACS objectives. In addition, the watershed analysis and other information was used to reach the conclusion that the actions either "meet" or "do not prevent attainment" of ACS objectives.

Terms and Conditions 2 (p. 67) - The proposed project was reviewed by the Level I Team. The NMFS Checklist and Matrix of Pathways and Indicators have been completed at the 5th field watershed and site (6th field) scales. Through this process, it was determined that the proposed actions have a negligible (extremely low) probability of take of proposed/listed anadromous salmonids or destruction /adverse modification of proposed/designated critical habitat. The proposed actions will be submitted for informal consultation with the NMFS.

No other Terms and Conditions specifically apply to Right-of-Way permits.

Hydrology

Direct and Indirect Effects

The proposed action is to grant the permittee the right to construct 2380 feet of road in the SW¼ of Section 33, T.27S., R.10W. Approximately 437 feet of this road is reconstructing the end of BLM Road No. 28-10-5.1B which has deteriorated over time due to lack of maintenance and poor initial road construction standards. The next 400 feet of road is mid-slope, descending to a relatively flat riparian area which will be used as a disposal site to place end hauled material from sections of full bench construction. This end haul material will also serve to reduce the grade of the road across this 150 foot section..

The creek at this location is an intermittent stream and will have a 36 inch diameter culvert. The drainage area above the culvert is approximately 25 acres. This culvert will pass in excess of a 100 year storm event without ponding. Ascending out of the riparian area entails another 650 feet of mid-slope construction. Turbidity/sediment delivery to stream channels may result if roads are used during wet weather periods and design features as outlined in the summary recommendations section are ignored. There would be a short-term and small direct and indirect effects of sediment delivery/turbidity to channels during winter road use periods without application of summary design features. There may be long-term direct and indirect effects if the road and culvert crossing is not maintained. There should be no appreciable change in cumulative effects from sediment delivery at the China Creek fifth field scale if recommended design features are employed. This is because, based on experience and monitoring, these conservation measures are effective in dramatically reducing onsite soil loss.

At 1645 feet, the proposed road location intersects a ridge and continues for approximately 735 feet on top of the ridge and crosses onto private land at 2380 feet. This road will be surfaced with sufficient rock. This rock will also prevent the road tread from eroding.

Interrelated/Interdependent

Menasha Corporation has planned a 120 acre unit adjacent to BLM in T 27S, R 10W, Sec. 32 WM. The unit is planned to be regeneration harvested and/or partially commercially thinned. The timber is approximately 50 years old. The south side of the unit has already been regeneration harvested in 2001. The unit overlays an interior ridge in the watershed (interfluve) and is bordered on three sides by headwater intermittent tributaries of China Creek. Plans require skyline logging. An approximate 75 foot width stream buffer has been left along the perennial fourth order stream on the southwest edge of the unit to the upper extent of fish habitat. About 0.5-0.7 mile of headwaters 2-3 order stream will be unbuffered or partially buffered by the applicant using current State Forest Practices Rules. It is likely that these stream segments will be dry during the summer, when the stream variable source network recedes to lower portions of the watershed. This is because the watershed size at this location is small, there is no groundwater accumulation due to impervious underlying rock strata, and soils drain rapidly in the spring. Furthermore, the wetted width of any remaining perennial stream in the vicinity will be low and because of the steep topography would receive considerable shade protection, even without forested canopy cover. Because of these factors and including the low available summer flow in the watershed (see below), my conclusion is that the summer water temperature will not change or only slightly for China Creek (+0.5 maximum), which is still well within State DEQ standards. This judgement is based upon the particular watershed evidence and the authors training and experience. Further modeling with temperature models such as Temp-86, or Heat Source could verify this conclusion. Therefore, it is expected that there will not be any thermal effects on streamflow based on the design of this logging plan.

East Fork Coquille is 303(d) listed for temperature. BLM has taken continuous summer temperature profiles in China Creek during 1997, and found that the seven day average maximum temperature was 59.8 ° F. These measurements were taken near the confluence of East Fork Coquille River in the lower part of the watershed. This is well below the 64° F DEQ standard for the South Coast Basin.

Summer flow was also taken (8/11/98) near the confluence of the East Fork Coquille, and found to be 0.342 cfs (153 gallons per minute).

Because several intermittent channels within the unit will be unbuffered, some sediment delivery will result after harvest. Broadcast burning, if used as a site preparation tool, will increase sediment delivery. The sediment delivery is expected to be short term (1-5 years) unless slumps or slides enter the channel.

SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS: On the BLM portion of the proposed action:

♢ Protect the inlet and outlet of the small channel stream crossing of the proposed alternative with rock to minimize sediment delivery. Develop a low spot in the road grade, offset from the culvert, to allow water to divert over the road without failure, should the culvert become plugged. Rock this overflow channel.

♢ Seed, fertilize and mulch all newly constructed areas. Mulch should be at an application rate where the ground or disturbed area is no longer visible (application rate of 2500 lbs. acre minimum).

♢ The newly constructed road segment should be included in the TO road maintenance plan.

If winter haul on gravel roads is planned, then the following additional Best Management Practices should be implemented to prevent sediment delivery at or near stream crossings along the haul route. The sediment prevention measures must be in place before winter haul begins. They include:

1) Contain any offsite movement of sediment from the road or ditchflow near streams with silt fence or

sediment entrapping blankets. Such control measures must allow for the free passage of water without detention or plugging. These control structures and applications should receive frequent maintenance, and be removed at the completion of haul.

2) If the ground is already saturated from winter rains and more than two inches of precipitation is predicted in the project area over the next 24 hours, then winter haul should be suspended. Operations may resume after the 24 hour suspension, except when another storm (exceeding two inches) is forecasted. Currently, precipitation predictions are based on the Quantitative Precipitation Forecast (QPF) maps form the HydroMeterological Predication Center intenet site: http://www.hpc.ncep.noaa.gov/html/fcst2.html A similar predictive model may be used if this site changes or becomes unavailable in the future.

Soils

Direct and Indirect Impacts
Rebuilding the 28-10-5.1B road to a higher standard then currently exists as well as the new construction proposed across the plantation will produce fine sediment that should be captured by the vegetation adjacent to the road areas. Hauling on rocked roads in the winter will produce fine sediment during active haul. This fine material can be captured and filtered by the use of silt fence or filter cloth as mentioned in the hydrology section. Large quantities of materials are not expected to slide off the proposed routes as mass movements based on the proposed cut and fill, full bench construction techniques. Should cutbank failures occur, equipment would be mobilized to remove the materials and keep the road open for use. Fine sediment delivery from this type of source is expected to be minor.

Interrelated/Interdependent Issues
This harvest is in addition to one that straddles China Creek already and was harvested last year. Fine sediment delivery is occurring there from disturbance activities such as yarding and burning. It should be expected that additional sediment will be delivered from the harvest of the proposed unit as well since the slopes are steeper, the amount of rock outcroppings greater, and the high potential for mass movements on this soil unit.

The cumulative effects of road construction, yarding and burning under this proposal would likely extend the increased turbidity levels and fine sediment delivery for the next 3-5 years. If large slides result from high precipitation events then the delivery of material may last for up to 10 years.

Vegetation, Including T & E and S & M Species

The timber along the construction route on BLM-administered lands is about 25 years old and is predominately Douglas-fir and Red alder. No populations or potential habitat for T & E or S & M plant species have been identified in the vicinity of this project; therefore, no impacts are expected to occur.

Geology

Direct and Indirect Impacts
This alternative would have minimal direct and indirect impacts on existing geologic conditions. Continued development of the natural system would not impact the underlying stratigraphy except in the aspects of geologic time. Project activities, such as fill construction on bench and fill design may initiate minor and localized surficial slope failures. However, given the vegetative buffer and localized nature of the failure, slide material should not enter into the waterways. Localized direct impacts may be minor disturbance of

localized soils within and adjacent to the failure. However, these direct and indirect impacts would be localized.

Cumulative Impacts
This alternative would have minimal cumulative impacts on existing geologic conditions. Continued development of the natural system would not impact the underlying stratigraphy except in the aspects of geologic time. Project activities such as fill construction on bench and fill design may initiate minor and localized surficial slope failures. However, given the vegetative buffer and localized nature of the failure, slide material should not enter the waterways or other natural or development induced slides. Therefore, there would be no cumulative impacts.

Hazardous Materials/Solid Wastes

There are no environmental consequences for hazardous material or solid waste under the Proposed Action. BLM administrators shall monitor and report any spills utilizing the reporting procedures in the District HazMat Contingency Plan and as required under Oregon State Forest Practices Act Petroleum Protection Rule (OAR 629-57-3600) and Oregon DEQ Spill Prevention Control and Counter Measures (SPCC) Rule (OAR 340-108).

Cultural Resources

No affect anticipated. However, if potential cultural resources are encountered during this project, all work in the vicinity should stop and the District Archeologist must be notified at once.

Port-Orford Cedar

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects
As this area has no Port-Orford cedar no affects are anticipated. In addition, vehicle washing for noxious weeds will reduce the likelihood of the direct introduction and/or spread of *Phytophthora lateralis*.

Noxious Weeds

Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects
Any potential for direct, indirect, or cumulative effects should be offset by requiring the washing of all equipment and vehicles prior to initial entry. No short or long term change from existing rates of spread/introduction are expected as a result of this alternative.

Environmental Justice
BLM concludes that no disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects will occur to native Americans, and minority or low-income populations as a result of any of the proposed actions.

Energy Exploration, Development, and transportation

No affect.

SECTION V - LIST OF AGENCIES
LIST OF PREPARERS AND CONTRIBUTORS
Literature Cited

List of Agencies

Bureau of Land Management
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service

List of Preparers and Contributors

Preparers	Initials	Date	Speciality
Joel Robb	_____	_____	Myrtlewood Road Manager, Team Lead
Dale Stewart	_____	_____	Soil Scientist
Dan Carpenter	_____	_____	Hydrologist
Nikki Moore	_____	_____	Fisheries Biologist
John Guetterman	_____	_____	Wildlife Biologist
Estella Morgan	_____	_____	Botanist
Bob Raper	_____	_____	District Noxious Weed Coordinator
Stephen Samuels	_____	_____	District Archaeologist, American Indian Coordinator, Environmental Justice
Tim Votaw	_____	_____	Hazardous Material Specialist
Jim Kowalick	_____	_____	Port Orford Cedar Coordinator
Tim Barnes	_____	_____	District Energy Development Coordinator

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USDA; USDI. 1994 . *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*. FS; BLM, Portland OR.

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EA No. OR128-01-03

Decision Documentation
for
Amendment to Right-of-Way and Road Use Agreement C-599

Background:
An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the use of existing roads was prepared by the Myrtlewood Resource Area, Coos Bay District Office of the Bureau of Land Management, using input from District resource staff. The proposal is to authorize the construction of new road for the transport of privately owned timber. The EA analyzed a No Action and Proposed Action Alternative. See attached EA for details of the analysis and conclusions.

Decision:
It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action of EA OR128-01-03, which analyzed the environmental effects of amending the road use permit. The amendment shall include those measures to control sediment movement as described in Section IV of the document.

The new road location is in T. 27 S., R. 10 W., Section 33, Willamette Meridian, Oregon.

Other project 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).

Rational:
The Proposed Action is the alternative that most closely meets the intent of the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan by providing for attainment of ACS objectives and reduced road miles on public lands.

The decision is consistent with the ROD for the Northwest Forest Plan and the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Decision Recommended by:

NRSA: _____ Date: _____

NRSA: _____ Date: _____

NRSA: _____ Date: _____

Decision approved by: Myrtlewoood Field Manager: _____ Date: _____