

DECISION RECORD
for the Grenada West Timber Sale
(Reference: Topsy/Pokegama/Hamaker Forest Health Treatments
Environmental Assessment #OR014-98-01)

The Grenada West Timber Sale is analyzed in the Topsy / Pokegama / Hamaker Forest Health Treatment (Environmental Assessment #OR014-98-01), which provides for a separate Decision Record be prepared at the time each sale is proposed. This Decision Record applies only to the Grenada West Timber Sale (the third sale proposed under this EA), which is scheduled to be sold August 29, 2001. A separate Decision Record for each proposed timber sale under the Topsy / Pokegama / Hamaker Forest Health Treatment Environmental Assessment is written to incorporate new information about the site specific area.

New Information

In January 2001, the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (S&M ROD) was issued. It provides additional direction, updated information and management guidelines for Threatened and Endangered (T&E) species and Survey and Manage (S&M) species addressed in the Klamath Falls Resource Area Management Plan (RMP) and the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP). This information was used to update some of the Project Design Features (PDFs) addressed in the Topsy/Pokegama/Hamaker Forest Health Treatment Environmental Assessment. The updates to the PDFs are primarily management recommendations that are required to protect S&M species addressed in the NFP that were not available at the time the FONSI was signed.

Implementing the new guidelines of the S&M ROD will result in more protection of S&M sites. As a result of more protection and less disturbance, the overall environmental impacts will be less than initially anticipated in the original EA. The new information addressed in this Decision Record is not substantial enough to warrant a supplemental or amended EA or EIS.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Northern Spotted Owls

Survey Protocol - The sale area has been monitored since 1991 to determine breeding status of local owls.

Survey Results - There has been an active northern spotted owl site within the proposed sale (Section 35) since 1991 (Topsy owls). The adults at this site nested and produced young 7 of the 11 years.

Management Recommendations - The Klamath Falls RMP states on Page 38; "Fall no trees within 1/4 mile of all active northern spotted owl nest sites from approximately March 1 to September 30 to avoid disturbance and harm to young owls." Through yearly monitoring and the consultation process, the seasonal restriction has been changed to March 1 - August 10. All young in the KFRA have fledged by late July and this date gives adequate protection to the nestlings.

Management To Be Implemented - To mitigate potential impacts to the owls, no harvesting within 1 mile of the nest site will occur until clarification on the on-going Gifford Pinchott lawsuit. All proposed harvesting within Section 35 including those areas within the District Designated Reserve Buffer (DDRB) will be postponed. In addition, if nesting does occur at existing sites or a new nest site is located within the

cutting area through the life of the timber sale contract, the above seasonal restrictions will be implemented.

Rationale - These measures meet or exceed the pertinent RMP and NFP northern spotted owl protection requirements and mitigate impacts in the immediate vicinity of known owl sites.

Bald Eagles

Survey Protocol - The sale area has been monitored since 1991 to determine the status of nesting eagles.

Survey Results - There are no known bald eagle nests in the proposed sale area.

Management Recommendations - The Klamath Falls RMP states on page 38: "Provide a buffer up to 30 acres around nest sites and restrict management activity near nest sites between January 1 and August 31."

Management To Be Implemented - If new nesting occurs within 1/4 mile of the cutting area throughout the life of the timber sale contract, the above seasonal restrictions will be implemented. In addition, a buffer of up to 30 acres will be provided around the active nest site.

Rationale - These measures meet the pertinent RMP bald eagle protection requirements and mitigate impacts in the immediate vicinity of known bald eagle sites.

Survey and Manage (S&M) Species - Predisturbance Surveys Required

Survey Protocol - The S&M ROD (2001) established a list of species where predisturbance surveys are required. Currently there are three species, two mollusks and one plant, requiring predisturbance surveys on the KFRA. Predisturbance surveys are to be conducted in **habitat areas** that support the three species listed. Recent changes in S&M protocol have dropped the requirement for predisturbance surveys in habitats not likely to support the S&M species.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Habitat</u>
<u>Mollusk</u>		
Crater Lake Tightcoil <i>(Pristiloma arcticum crateris)</i>	(Category B - pg. 50 of S&M Jan. 2001 ROD)	Habitat: greater than 610 meter elevation in moist conifer forest and in mosses/other vegetation near wetlands, springs, seeps, riparian areas.
Oregon Shoulderband <i>(Helminthoglypta hertleinii)</i>	(Category B - pg. 49 of S&M Jan. 2001 ROD)	Habitat: generally associated with talus and other rocky substrates.
<u>Plants</u>		
Mountain Ladyslipper <i>(Cypripedium montanum)</i>	(Category C - pg. 50 of S&M Jan. 2001 ROD)	Habitat: widespread, very uncommon in the KFRA.

Survey Results - None of the above species were found in the proposed sale area during the surveys.

Management Recommendations - For Category B species, Pg. 7&8 of the S&M ROD states: "Manage All Known Sites: Current and future known sites will be managed according to the Management

Recommendations for the species.” For Category C species, Pg. 7 & 10 of the S&M ROD states: “Manage High Priority Sites: High-priority sites will be managed according to the Management Recommendations for the species.”

Management To Be Implemented - None

Rationale - No known sites were located.

Survey and Manage (S&M) Species - Predisturbance Surveys Not Required - Manage All Known Sites

Fungi

Under the direction of the S&M ROD (January 2001), predisturbance surveys for S&M **fungi** on the Klamath Falls Resource Area are no longer needed. The S&M ROD does require however, that we “Manage All Known Sites”. These would be sites located prior to the signing of the S&M ROD in January 2001. Currently there are approximately 620 known sites of fungi species in the Resource Area. Of these, only one is located in the Grenada West Timber Sale area.

Survey Protocol -.

No surveys for fungi are required per S&M ROD.

Survey Results

During the required predisturbance surveys for mollusk, a single fungi site was located in the Grenada West Timber Sale. As a result, it was added to the existing list of species where Management Of All Known Sites is required. This species was *Mycena monticola*, which is a Category B species.

Management Recommendations

The NFP ROD (January, 2001) lists the standards and guidelines for managing Category A, B, C, D, E, and F species. Species within Category A, B, and E, are thought to be rare and therefore direction is to “**manage all known sites.**”

Management To Be Implemented -

The site location was flagged and captured with a Geographical Positioning System (GPS), and entered into the regional corporate S&M database referred to as ISMS (Interagency Species Management System). To protect the site from ground disturbing activities, a no-harvest buffer was flagged around the site.

Rationale - Harvest restrictions around known sites and measures taken to prevent site disturbance by logging equipment will protect the microclimate and the species.

Protection Buffer Species - Great Gray Owls

Survey Protocol - The sale area has been surveyed from 1996 through 2001 in accordance with the survey protocol for Great Gray Owl (May 12, 1995 direction from the Regional Interagency Executive Committee Members and California Federal Executives, and BLM Informational Bulletin No. OR-97-311 which described adjustments to the original great gray owl protocol).

Survey Results - No great grey owls were found

Management Recommendations - None

Management Implemented - None

Other Issues Addressed in EA

Soils

Detrimental soil disturbance as a result of timber harvesting activities is an issue addressed in the EA. A number of mitigating measures are proposed in the EA to reduce the impacts to soils (page 32 of EA). For the Grenada West Timber Sale, some site specific factors will help reduce soil impacts. These include:

1. Gentle slopes. Much of the Grenada West is on slopes less than 15 percent.
2. Existing slash on the forest floor. Much of the area was precommercially thinned 10 to 15 years ago. As a result, there is a layer of old precommercial thinning slash which will help cushion the soil from disturbance.
3. No submerchantable thinning (3'-7" material) is proposed as part of this timber sale. On recently completed timber sales that have been monitored, the KFRA required submerchantable thinning concurrently with the commercial sawlog thinning. Although post treatment monitoring of this project design feature has indicated a positive impact by reducing ladder fuels and stand densities in the understory, the soil impacts increased slightly due to the requirement to harvest the smaller trees in the stands using the mechanical harvester.

The EA discusses using a rubber tired harvester/forwarder operation (Mitigation Measure 1). The advantage of using rubber tired equipment versus track mounted equipment is less soil is displaced when the rubber tired equipment has to pivot or turn. However, the disadvantage of using a rubber tired harvester/forwarder is this form of harvesting leaves the limb slash in the units and results in increased fuel loading.

The KFRA is continuing to monitor soil impacts of on-going operations on an annual basis as required in the RMP. In addition, all operations are monitored to determine what combination of the mitigating measures described on page 32 of the EA could be used to best mitigate impacts under similar site specific conditions.

Fuels

The excessive fuel loads in the Grenada West sale area are primarily a result of past precommercial thinning, incidental mortality, and fire suppression policies. The decision is to treat the slash in a combination of ways. For the timber sale, all trees will be whole-tree yarded or yarded with the tops attached to reduce the amount of fuels added to the area. In addition, as separate treatments and service contracts, the slash in specified areas will be crushed with a "slash buster" and/or underburned. A slash buster is designed to break up slash concentrations to increase decomposition rates and spread out fuels in preparation for underburning. Whole tree yarding will occur on the entire timber sale area, approximately 1000 acres. Underburning and/or slash crushing will occur on up to 1000 acres.

Decision For The Grenada West Timber Sale

Consultation - The Grenada West treatment area is within the known range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the area analyzed in the Northwest Forest Plan. The BLM began informal consultation on the Topsy / Pokegama / Hamaker Forest Health Treatment Environmental Assessment in 1999. In lieu of completing a programmatic biological assessment for entire analysis area, the lead BLM biologist wrote a biological assessment for the Grenada West Timber Sale area only. The BLM, through a biological assessment, has determined that the proposed action will result in a "no effect" determination for the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), shortnose sucker (*Deltistes luxatus*) and Lost River sucker (*Chasmistes brevirostris*) and a "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect" determination for the northern spotted owl. The USF&WS concurred with this determination on July 20, 2001.

My decision is to implement the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative A) of the

Topsy/Pokegama/Hamaker Forest Health Treatments Environmental Assessment (EA #OR-014-98-01) for the Grenada West Timber Sale, involving harvest of approximately 2,500 thousand board feet (MBF) over approximately 1,000 acres. The new information presented above concerning threatened and endangered species, survey and manage species, and Protection Buffer species is sufficiently addressed in the EA and this Decision Record. The Grenada West Timber Sale treatment will be implemented using BLM timber sale procedures and is expected to occur over the next 2 to 3 years.

The initial Decision Record is consistent with the goals and objectives of the:

Final Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) and its Record of Decision (June 1995).

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management Habitat for Late-Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan).

Klamath Falls Resource Area Fire Management EA (OR-014-94-09)

Klamath Falls Resource Area Integrated Weed Control Plan EA (OR-014-93-09).

With this supplemental information, the original EA and Decision Record are also consistent with the goals and objectives of the "*Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffers, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines.*"

Topsy / Pokegama / Hamaker Forest Health Treatment (Environmental Assessment #OR014-98-01) analysis area lies within the overlap area of the Northwest Forest Plan and the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project. This decision was considered within the context of both of these management efforts, including the Scientific Assessments associated with ICBEMP. No additional analysis is deemed necessary at this time.

CONCLUSION

I have determined that neither a supplement to the Environmental Assessment (EA) nor a change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Grenada West Timber Sale is necessary for these reasons:

The existing EA for the Grenada West Timber Sale fully covers the project as modified by the proposed mitigation and adjustments. There will be no substantial changes to the action as proposed in the EA. The action as amended is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the EA, and the environmental impacts are within those analyzed in the EA and less than those anticipated for the preferred alternative in that assessment.

There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the modification to the proposed action or its impacts which were not addressed in the EA. The EA anticipated protecting Survey and Manage species in accordance with the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan and the KFRA RMP. The surveys conducted for this sale satisfy the survey requirements for this sale as amended by the S&M ROD which was approved in January 2001, and fulfills the Survey and Manage Commitment identified in the EA.

Teri A. Raml
Field Manager

Date