

Decision Record
for
Wolf Tree Upland Fuels Treatment
EA #OR-110-01-036

I. Decision: I have decided to implement the fuels treatments proposed under alternative 1 as described in the Wolf Tree Project environmental assessment (EA) #OR-110-01-036, dated July 17, 2001. The Wolf Tree Upland Fuels Treatment includes urban interface, ladder fuels reduction and creation of defensible space treatments. Urban interface treatments will reduce the high risk to wildfire near residences. Ladder fuels reduction will reduce the vertical fuel ladders and overstocked conditions in upper elevations of the watershed. Establishing defensible space along strategic ridge lines and main travel routes will reduce the risk of crown fires with the wider spaced canopies within the defensible space. This defensible space would also provide a safer environment in which to rapidly deploy personnel and equipment in the event of a wildfire. This decision does not include other proposed activities under alternative 1 such as timber harvesting, road maintenance and culvert replacement which will be decided upon at a later date.

The EA proposes slashing, hand piling and pile burning (approximately 1,700 acres), under burning (approximately 16 acres) and mechanical slashing (approximately 45 acres). After consulting with my project fuels specialist and interdisciplinary team members, I have decided to adjust the acres treated within these areas: approximately 1,570 acres would be pile burned, 124 acres under burned and 75 acres mechanically slashed. Treatment of these acres are included and within the effects analyzed in the EA. Lighter fuel concentrations were found in the proposed slashing, hand piling and pile burning areas. Lighter amounts of fuels do not require more intensive slashing, piling and burning of the piles as needed for higher fuel loads. Under burning these areas would create a mosaic burn pattern and only the concentrated fuels would be consumed. The units to be under burned include 22-11, 28-12, 28-13, 30-4 and 14-9. Those units to be mechanically slashed include 22-11, 28-13 and 28-14. Approximately 125 acres of the fuels treatments will occur along the roadside. Roadside treatments would typically consist of slashing, piling and pile burning and some mechanical treatments.

Upland conifers, under 7" (inches) in diameter at breast height (DBH), will be thinned to spacings between 10 and 20 feet. Hardwoods and shrubs under 7" (inches) DBH will be slashed and hardwoods greater than 7" (inches) DBH will be girdled and left standing. Approximately 10 hardwoods per acre will be left untreated to provide for habitat diversity and species size diversity. The majority of cut shrubs and hardwoods, such as madrone, are expected to re-sprout. Created slash will be hand piled and burned during the wet season. Treatments within Riparian Reserves include slashing and hand piling of conifers, brush and hardwoods less than 4" (inches) DBH and will not occur within 50' (feet) of streams. Burning of piles in the Riparian Reserves is not included under this decision.

Mechanical and manual thinning and slashing treatments could occur year-round. Hand pile burning will occur under late-fall or winter conditions, after adequate rainfall has minimized the potential for fire spread. Under burning is scheduled for the spring or during dry periods in the fall or winter. Specific areas designated for treatment are attached.

I have decided to implement all project design features as identified in the EA on pages 21 to 28. The public was notified of the Wolf Tree Project environmental assessment through the Grants Pass Daily Courier (July 24, 2001) and Umpqua Free Press (July 26, 2001) newspapers.

II. Rationale: This action meets the purpose and need of the proposal to treat vegetation to reduce the risk of wild land fire to BLM and private lands. Surveys will be completed for bryophytes and lichens prior to burning. If survey and manage species are found, they will be given appropriate buffers as described in the EA.

I received letters of comments from two organizations and one individual. The majority of the comments were in regard to timber harvesting, which will not occur at this time. Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KSWC) made numerous comments to fire and fuels management. One of their main objections was that I am using defensible spaces as a means to perpetuate logging. Again, I point out that only trees less than 7" (inches) DBH, not of commercial size, will be thinned. Also KSWC objects to the BLM (and taxpayers) protecting private property in the interface zone and states that property owners "must also bear the consequences of living in the fire plane." I disagree. Congress has directed the BLM to administer lands for both conserving ecosystems and at the same time providing raw materials and other resources that are needed to sustain the health and economic well-being of the people of this country (Medford Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP), p.4). Also, BLM actions include reducing "natural fuel hazards on BLM-administered lands in rural interface areas" (RMP, p.89).

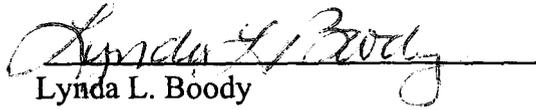
The No-Action alternative was not selected because it did not meet the identified purpose and need of reducing wild fire fuel levels in the area. The fuels reduction proposals in alternative 2 and 3 are similar to alternative 1 but differ in the amount of harvest units that would be treated for slash. Potential harvest units under alternative 1 will not be treated for slash under this decision.

This decision is consistent with the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (1994) and Record of Decision for the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (RMP) dated April 14, 1995, the Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (2001) as well as the Endangered Species Act, The Native American Religious Freedom Act, cultural resource management laws and regulations and other Bureau of Land Management critical elements. There are also no adverse effects on energy development, production or distribution.

The decision record will appear in the Grants Pass Daily Courier and Umpqua Free Press. The date of publication of the legal notice will constitute the decision date for purposes of protests and appeals under **43 CFR 5003**. Protests must be filed in writing within 15 days of the publication of the decision or within 15 days of this decision record.

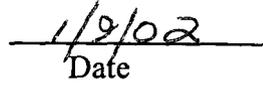
Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act,

you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety



Lynda L. Boody

Field Manager, Glendale Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management



Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
for the
Wolf Tree Upland Fuels Treatment
EA #OR-110-01-036

The Wolf Tree Upland Fuels Treatment EA can be obtained at the Medford District Office or on the Medford BLM internet site: <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>.

The specific units and areas are identified on the attached map within the Wolf Tree planning area. The public notice of availability of this FONSI is provided through the Medford BLM internet site and newspapers in the area of the project.

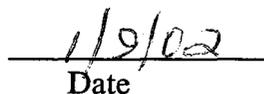
The following critical elements will not be adversely affected by this project and have been analyzed in the EA: air quality, areas of critical environmental concern, historical or cultural resources, Native American religious sites, prime or unique farmlands, flood plains, threatened or endangered species, known hazardous waste areas, water quality, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness and energy development, production or distribution..

FONSI DETERMINATION

Based on the effects discussed in the Wolf Tree Project environmental assessment (EA), I have determined that the fuels treatments portion of Alternative 1, which I have selected, will not have significant effect on the human environment. Effects will not be beyond those already fully described in the Final Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. For this reason, no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared.



Lynda L. Boody
Field Manager, Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management


Date

Wolf Tree Project Fuel Treatments

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- Streams
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