

**DECISION RECORD II**  
**Coyote Pete Timber Sale**  
**analyzed under the**  
**Wolf Tree Environmental Assessment (OR-110-01-036)**

**Decision**

It is my decision to implement Alternative 1 and associated project design features proposed in the Wolf Tree Project environmental assessment (EA # OR110-01-036). This Decision Record supercedes the King Wolf and Coyote Pete Timber Decision and Rationale (July 3, 2002) and applies only to my decisions regarding the proposed Coyote Pete Timber Sale. The King Wolf Timber Sale has already been sold. The Wolf Tree Planning Area is located east of the community of Wolf Creek and Interstate 5 highway and delineated by the Upper Wolf and Coyote sixth field watershed boundaries. The legal description is T 33S, R 5W, sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, Josephine County. The BLM administers approximately 11,000 acres (52%) of the total 21,000 acres in the Planning Area. The remaining 48% is divided between state, county and private ownerships. The Coyote Pete Timber Sale Timber will occur on the southern portion of the Wolf Tree Planning Area, within the Coyote sixth field watershed. Implementation of this sale is planned to occur within the next three years.

The following harvest units have been modified or deferred for the following reasons. A wetland located in the middle of unit 27-4 has reduced the overall size from 23 acres to 12 acres after applying appropriate buffer widths. This has created two separate harvest units, 27-4N (10 acres) and 27-4S (2 acres). Timber harvesting on units 23-4, 27-1, 28-8A and 28-8B will be deferred at this time because these stands are dominated by non commercial conifers or brush. Units 23-4 and 27-1 will be analyzed at a later time for fuels reduction.

Alternative 1 (for the Coyote Pete Sale) will commercially harvest approximately 149 acres through 12 acres of regeneration harvest, 13 acres of overstory removal, and 124 acres of commercial thinning.

At least 6-10 standing large conifers and 2 large hardwoods per acre, as well as snags and down logs, will be left after regeneration harvesting or overstory removal. In some cases, additional trees will be retained for recruitment of coarse woody debris, to serve as potential snags, to compensate for trees lost to broadcast burning, to provide additional shade for seedlings, or to help retain moist conditions in talus habitat. In the overstory removal units, existing conifer reproduction will be retained to establish the next stand. In commercial thin units, the existing stand will be thinned to release the residual trees.

Following harvest, many of the units will receive site preparation treatments specified in Table 1 of the EA (I approved the implementation of reducing existing fuel hazards in my earlier Wolf Tree Upland Fuels Treatment Decision Record dated January 9, 2002). Regeneration harvest units will be reforested using planted nursery stock. Additional treatments, such as shade-carding, mulching, deer browse protection and controlling competing vegetation might be required to ensure adequate seedling establishment. Maintenance treatments will be

implemented for up to ten years following harvest or until the canopy has closed enough to reduce brush species growth.

The Coyote Pete Timber Sale will follow the updated list of Survey and Manage species and their protection buffers as identified under the annual Species Review Process 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* (S&M ROD 2001). The S&M ROD, which the Wolf Tree EA tiers to, provides a Species Review Process for making adaptive management changes (S&M ROD, p. 8). Changes to the placement for species through the Species Review Process were identified in BLM-Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2002-064. The annual species review list removed all fungi identified in the Wolf Tree EA (pp. 35, 36) for buffer protection.

As decided in the previous Decision and Rationale, approximately 5.3 miles of road will be decommissioned and 3.7 miles of road will be closed with barricades. Decommissioning roads will place land back into production and reduce erosion. It will also reduce vehicle access to lands previously open to the public for hunting, mining, and recreation. Decommissioned roads will be subsoiled, and either mulched or seeded. Cross drains, fills in stream channels, and potentially unstable fill areas will be removed to restore natural hydrologic flow. Barricaded roads are temporary closures to the general public and will be open for BLM administrative uses on a seasonal basis, depending upon impacts to the resources.

Road work will include reshaping existing road prisms and drainage ditches (26.8 mi), improving road drainage by installing waterdips and converting ditched roads to an outsloped configuration (8.5 mi). My decision does not include crushed aggregate surfacing of existing roads and replacing/adding cross drains and bottom lay culverts for the Coyote Pete Timber Sale. Four existing road segments requiring renovation and maintenance work were inadvertently left out of Table 2 of the EA. This includes blading and brushing 0.5 miles of the Wolf Creek spur (33-5-10.3B) and blading 0.9 miles of the Murphy Road (32-5-22E) to access an existing helicopter landing. This would cause minimal disturbance because these roads are near the ridgetop. The third segment includes 0.2 miles of maintenance on road 33-5-13-2. Maintenance activities include blading and cleaning cross drains. The fourth road is 33-5-22.2, which is 0.68 miles in length. Road work involves cleaning of culverts, brush removal and blading. Two waterdips will be installed for drainage improvement. These activities have been reviewed by interdisciplinary team specialists and the effects are considered minimal and within the effects analysis of the EA (page 30). There will be no effect to threatened or endangered species.

## **Rationale**

The decision to implement this proposal meets the purpose and need identified in the EA and furthers the intent established in the Northwest Forest Plan and RMP to manage matrix lands with commercial forest products as a major objective. The National Marine Fisheries Service provided a letter of concurrence that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect Southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon and Klamath Mountains Province steelhead trout. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife surveys indicate an absence of coho salmon juveniles in Wolf Creek or Coyote Creek.

Three public meetings, including a field trip, were conducted between June and November of 2000 for Wolf Creek residents. I received a letter from the Sunny Wolf Community Response Team expressing their thanks for including public participating in the planning efforts. The initial Proposal included approximately 970 acres of regeneration harvesting, 100 acres of commercial thinning and 180 acres of pre-commercial thinning. The King Wolf and Coyote Pete Timber Sales combined will harvest approximately 337 acres of timber.

There were three letters of comments from the public regarding the Wolf Tree Project. The main categories of the relevant comments included 1) disagreement with the management objectives in Matrix lands 2) objections to harvesting in spotted owl Critical Habitat Units (CHUs) 3) asking that more detail be provided in the EA such as the survey methodology for the red tree vole 4) disagreement with many of the management practices and protection measures concerning late-successional associates, especially Survey and Manage species.

While some comments disagree with management objectives in the Matrix land allocation, the Wolf Tree Project EA states in the Purpose and Need that it will implement the broader Medford Resource Management Plan and also tiers to that Plan's amendments.

Some comments claim that harvesting in Critical Habitat Units is illegal or in violation of the Endangered Species Act. Nothing in the comments indicate that the effects on spotted owls resulting from this project are beyond those described in the Final EIS for the Medford District Resource Management Plan to which the EA is tiered. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is aware of the potential impacts to both the northern spotted owl and its critical habitat through the Medford BLM and Rogue River and Siskiyou National Forest's biological assessment. Further, they issued a Biological Opinion (B.O. #1-7-01-F-032), fully aware of the full impacts to the species and habitat of the proposed action: the degree to which habitat (critical or not) would be degraded or removed, and the proportion of the existing habitat **B**critical or not**B**that would be affected, the location of affected Critical Habitat Units (CHUs) in relation to Late-Successional Reserves (LSRs) and the potential for connectivity that would be affected. The Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that the proposed cutting will not result in adverse modification to Critical Habitat and that the action will not violate the Endangered Species. B.O. #1-7-01-F-032 identifies spotted owl incidental take, but concludes that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the existence of the spotted owl, nor likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat for the spotted owl (BO pp. 48-49).

One comment stated that the survey methodology for various species should be specifically described in the EA. I disagree with that contention, since the methods have been described and those descriptions are available to the public. It is clear that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) calls for concise and focused descriptions of the proposals and their effects; not all background information is required to be part of the NEPA document. The methods used and the details of the findings are available in the Medford District office; including that level of background detail will result in extremely unwieldy and unnecessarily large documents and will not lead to better decision making or understanding by the public.

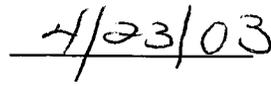
Several comments disagreed with management practices of Survey and Manage species. Many of those concerns have been dealt with in the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Survey and Manage, Protection Buffers and other Mitigating Measures Standards and Guidelines*. The Wolf Tree EA tiers to the analyses in these documents. The fact that some people disagree with those analyses or the decisions based on those documents is beyond the scope of the EA. I have reviewed the specific protection measures and analysis done for these species in light of the objections raised in the comment letters and can find no basis for modifying the proposed alternative.

Many of the comments are simply stating a disagreement with commercial harvest on matrix lands. Others allege faulty or incomplete analysis, but do not offer any data or evidence that will indicate that the EA is inadequate. I am confident that the EA represents a thorough analysis of the site-specific impacts to affected habitats and species, in light of the more comprehensive analysis done in the Medford RMP and Northwest Forest Plan to which the EA is tiered.

In summary, I find that the action will be consistent with the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, and amendments. In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulations (43 CFR 5003.2(1)), the decision for this timber sale will not become effective, or be open to formal protest, until the first Notice of Sale appears in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located. Protests must be filed in writing within 15 days of the publication of the decision or within 15 days of this decision record. Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.



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



Date

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
for the Coyote Pete Timber Sale  
analyzed under the  
Wolf Tree Environmental Assessment (OR-110-01-036)**

The proposed actions for the Coyote Pete Timber Sale are described in the Wolf Tree environmental assessment (EA) and can be obtained at the Medford District or on the Medford BLM internet site: <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford>

The proposed action is located in: T 33S, R 5W Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 in Josephine County.

The following critical elements identified in the BLM handbook 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, prime or unique farmlands, floodplains, Native American religious sites, invasive species, energy, threatened or endangered species, known hazardous waste areas, water quality, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness and environmental justice. The effects on Threatened and Endangered Species and special status species are described in the EA. Formal and informal consultation requirements, as required under the Endangered Species Act, have been met with US Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion (#1-7-01-F-032) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) letter of concurrence that implementation of the proposed actions was "not likely to adversely affect" Southern Oregon/Northern California (SONC) coho salmon or Klamath Mountains Province (KMP) ESU steelhead trout. The NMFS also found that the proposed actions are unlikely to adversely affect any designated essential fish habitat (EFH) in the same letter dated March 14, 2002. Surveys for Survey and Manage plant and animal species have been completed and appropriate protocol buffer measures will be applied. *Fritillaria gentneri* was not found within the Planning Area.

The estimation of impacts was based on research, professional judgment and experience of the interdisciplinary team. This method of estimating effects to the environment reduces the uncertainties to a level which does not involve highly unknown or unique risks.

**FONSI DETERMINATION**

I have reviewed the environmental assessment, including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts not previously identified, and I have also reviewed the comments received from the public concerning this proposal. I have determined the action described above will not have any significant impacts on the human environment beyond those already fully described in the Medford District Resource Management Plan and amendments and that a supplemental EIS is not required.

  
Lynda L. Boody  
Glendale Resource Area Field Manager  
Medford District, BLM

4/23/03  
Date