

DECISION RECORD/RATIONALE/FONSI
SUCKER CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT
(EA #OR110-00-22)

I. DECISION: Implement Alternative 2 (Proposed Action), with the exception of Section C.2.c.2.a.(2) *Phytophthora lateralis* control / Port Orford Cedar sanitation, as described in Chapter 2 of the Sucker Creek Restoration Project Environmental Assessment (EA#OR-110-00-22). Specific actions of Alternative 2 are described in terms of “Objectives” and “Description” for Hydrologic Function, Fisheries, Vegetation, Terrestrial Wildlife. Implementation of this decision should include all project design features as described in the environmental assessment.

Implementation of this decision should also include proposed mitigating measure 1 as described in the environmental assessment. This mitigating measure will encourage establishment of native vegetation and limit spreading of the invasive species, meadow knapweed.

MONITORING REQUIREMENTS - The following monitoring actions should be implemented as part of this project:

- (1). On both sites, monitor pre/post treatment for changes in stream channel configuration.
- (2). Monitor stream temperatures in Sucker Creek.

II. RATIONALE: Implementing the Proposed Action will provide for and promote a wide variety of values and desired ecosystem condition objectives identified in the Medford District Resource Management Plan and the NW Forest Plan. This action incorporates several project design features which minimize short and long term adverse effects of the actions to be implemented. Although some short term adverse environmental effects have been identified, post treatment stream channel and riparian conditions will improve the potential of long term healthy riparian conditions and provide improved coho salmon and other fish habitats. Implementation of this decision will also help meet long range water quality objectives identified in the Water Quality Management Plan and its references to the NW Forest Plan. For the Proposed Action, there were no effects identified that would prevent attainment of the Northwest Forest Plan, provincial/regional landscape objectives or primary land allocation objectives of the Medford District Resource Management Plan.

Under this decision, implementation of the *Phytophthora lateralis* control / Port Orford Cedar sanitation as described in Chapter 2 of the environmental assessment would be postponed. Postponing this activity would not prevent the attainment of improved stream channel and riparian conditions and, improved coho salmon and other fish habitat. Not including the proposed

Phytophthora lateralis control treatments in this decision is based on the status of incomplete survey and manage species surveys in the project area. Upon completion of all appropriate survey and manage species surveys, a future decision would be made regarding potential *Phytophthora lateralis* control treatments in the Sucker Creek project area.

Alternative 1 (the No Action Alternative) was rejected because it does not promote long term improvement of riparian conditions, water quality, and coho salmon habitat. When compared to current conditions, the No Action Alternative would result in increased sediment in the stream due to stream bank erosion caused by stream flow contact with mining fill material. Stream recovery, improved riparian vegetation, improved water quality, and improved fish habitat would occur in a much longer period than under Alternative 2.

Alternative 3, which was based on input from Cascade Earth Sciences (CES) Consultants, was rejected. Implementation of this alternative would rely heavily on engineered techniques such as channel excavation, dike construction, and riprap placement in order to maintain stream channel stability. It was rejected because a high degree of disturbance, especially in the channel, would be necessary in order to implement this alternative. It has potential to meet the objectives outlined in Chapter 2 of the environmental assessment, except flood plains on both sites would not be fully functional. This would result in the risk of future failure and environmental damage.

All public input was evaluated as part of the decision process. Public EA review comments did not provide new information, specific data gaps or new analysis that identifies substantial effects that would lead the decision maker to conclude that a Finding of No Significant Impact was not appropriate. Also, public comments received did not identify significant new data which would alter the effects described in the environmental assessment.

This decision is consistent with the Medford District Resource Management Plan and the Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. This decision is also consistent with the Endangered Species Act, The Native American Religious Freedom Act and cultural resource management laws and regulations.

III. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT: On the basis of the information contained in the environmental assessment for the Sucker Creek Restoration Project, it is my determination that the decision stated above does not constitute significant effects to the quality of the human environment. In addition this project does not exceed the range of effects discussed in the various EIS documents to which the project EA is tiered. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR 5003.2 (a&c), the effective date of the decision, will be the date of publication of the Notice of Decision and FONSI in The Grants Pass Daily Courier. This establishes the date for initiation of the protest period in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3. A notice may appear in other newspapers. However, the date of publication in the Grants Pass Daily Courier will prevail as it relates to establishing the beginning of a protest period.

Those contesting this decision document should state specifically which part of this decision is being protested or appealed and cite the appropriate CFR regulations.

/s/

8/24/2000

Willy E. Ray
Acting Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management

Date