

**South River Commercial Thinning 2000
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-00-08**

Prepared: August 27, 2001

Decision Documentation

Decision: It is my decision to offer Hurricane Ruby Commercial Thinning. This decision partially implements Alternative 2 as described in the EA (p. 3-5), and authorizes the commercial thinning of Units J and K. These units, totaling 34 acres, are allocated as General Forest Management Area and located in Section 19, T. 29 S., R. 2 W., and Section 9, T. 30 S., R. 2 W., W.M. (map attached). There is no density management within Riparian Reserves associated with this sale. The volume to be offered is approximately 690 MBF, equivalent to 1,244 CCF. It is anticipated that some additional volume will be modified into the sale as a result of the cutting of tail, guyline, and corridor trees.

Surveys were conducted for those Special Status and Special Attention botanical species that were identified in the EA (pp. 16-17). The results of these surveys were negative. Protocol surveys for the Oregon red tree vole (*Arborimus longicaudus*) were conducted for those units containing suitable habitat, as described in the EA (p. 14). A single active nest site was identified in Unit J. Establishment of a habitat area resulted in the removal of 3 acres, reducing the 23 acres proposed in the EA (p. 5) to 20 acres. Refinement of the boundaries for Unit K resulted in an increase of 1 acre, to 14 acres, compared to the 13 acres proposed in the EA (p. 5).

Access will be provided by existing roads and the construction of one temporary spur road, approximately 1,400 feet in length. The temporary road will be constructed, used and decommissioned in the same operating season. Decommissioning will be accomplished by BLM road maintenance personnel. A portion of BLM Road No. 30-2-13.1, totaling approximately 1,100 feet, will be renovated. Renovation will consist of installation of a culvert and grading of the road surface. Following completion of thinning operations the culvert will be removed, the road surface will be water barred, and the road blocked to use.

In order to reduce the likelihood of the introduction of noxious weeds into the project area, all logging and road building equipment will be pressure washed or steam cleaned prior to being moved into the project area.

Rationale for the Decision:

This decision is based upon the following: The Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP 1995) identifies the need for management of suitable commercial forest land to assure a high level of sustained timber productivity (p. 150), and commercial thinning of

stands under 80 years of age to assure high levels of volume productivity while maintaining stand health and vigor (p. 151). Alternative 2, the proposed action, would achieve this objective, whereas, Alternative 1 would not.

Comments on this analysis were received from three organizations, and considered in the preparation of this decision. None of the comments identified issues or concerns which were not already considered and addressed in the EA, or which constituted new information that would change the conclusions of the analysis.

As described in the EA (p. 11), proposed Unit J is located in designated critical habitat for the northern spotted owl, situated within the territorial range of two sites, and adjacent to the activity center of one site. Proposed Unit K is situated within the territorial range of three sites. The BLM conferred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this project and a letter of concurrence was received on May 31, 2001. The letter (File Name: 1-15-01-1-270) was in response to a BLM request for written concurrence on effects determination for FY 2001-2002 Programmatic Assessments for Activities Not Likely to Adversely Affect Listed Species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that the action was not likely to adversely affect the northern spotted owl because, while thinning would degrade dispersal habitat in the short term, the habitat is expected to function as intended and improve over time. If surveys of activity centers determine that owls are nesting, seasonal restrictions will be placed on operations from March 1 through June 30 to avoid potential disturbance, consistent with project design features contained in Appendix A of the letter of concurrence.

The BLM determined that the project would have no effect on the Oregon Coast coho salmon and the Oregon Coast steelhead trout, and no effect on designated critical habitat for the coho salmon. This determination was based upon the following:

- There is no identifiable degradation to aquatic habitat or environmental conditions. Present habitat elements and access would be maintained at the subwatershed and watershed levels, and improved at the site level in the long term (EA, p. 34).
- Within their respective drainages, Unit J is approximately 0.5 miles above anadromous stream reaches, and Unit K approximately 8 miles above anadromous stream reaches.
- In the absence of any disturbance to Riparian Reserves on these two units, and with the implementation of seasonal restrictions on thinning operations and timber hauling, there is no discernible means by which sediment would be created and transported downstream to fish-bearing reaches and anadromous habitat.

Compliance and Monitoring:

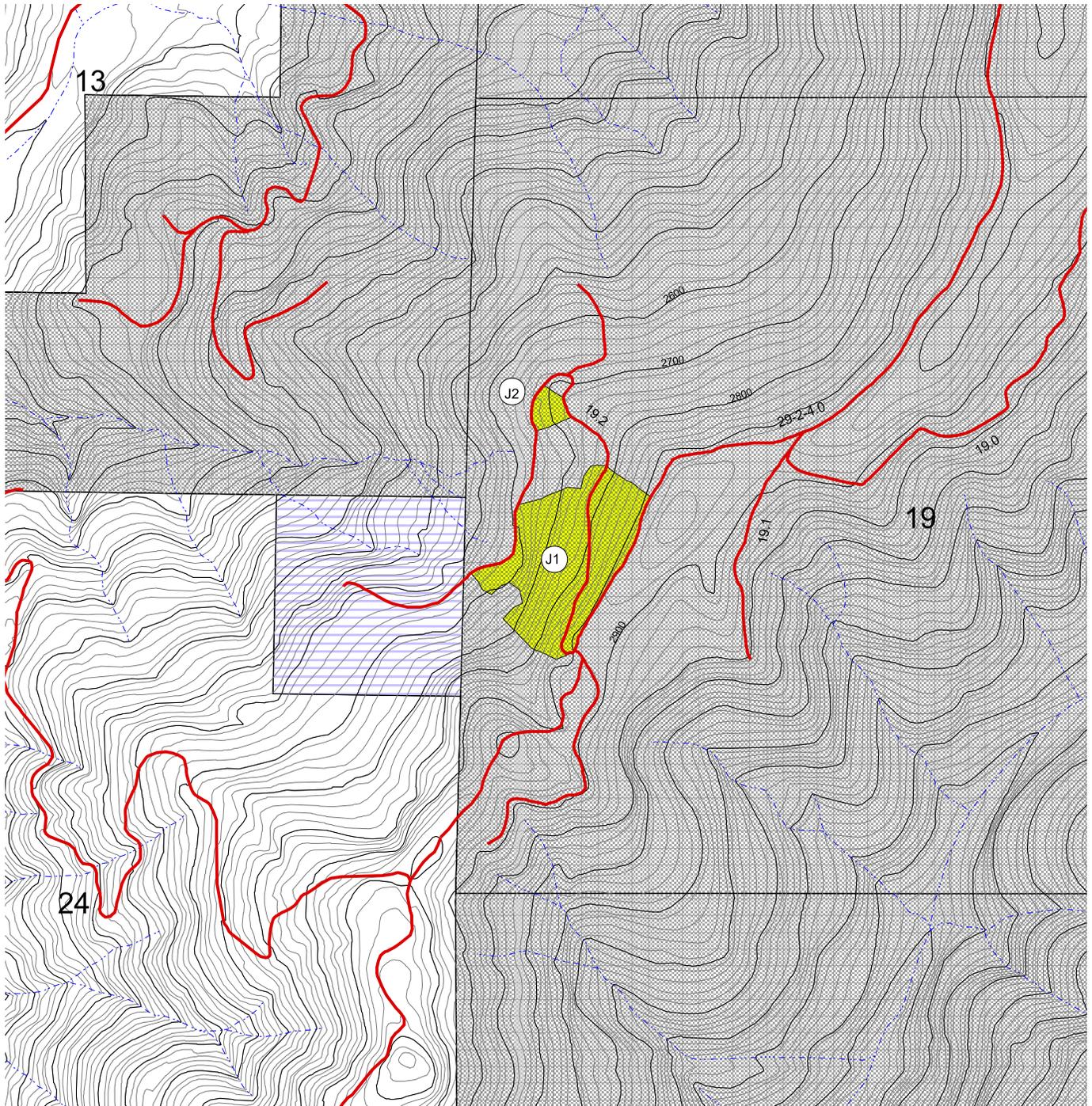
Monitoring will be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 84, 190, 193, and 195-199). Effectiveness and validation monitoring will be conducted with regards to: Riparian Reserves, Matrix, Water and Soils, Wildlife Habitat, and Special Status and Special Attention Species Habitat.

Protest and Appeals Procedures: As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies under § 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests may be made within 15 days of the August 28, 2001, publication date of the first notice of sale in the Roseburg, Oregon *News Review*. Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date

HURRICANE RUBY COMMERCIAL THINNING



T29S, R3W

T29S, R2W



T29S R2W

Willamette Meridian, Roseburg, OR.

1000 0 1000 Feet

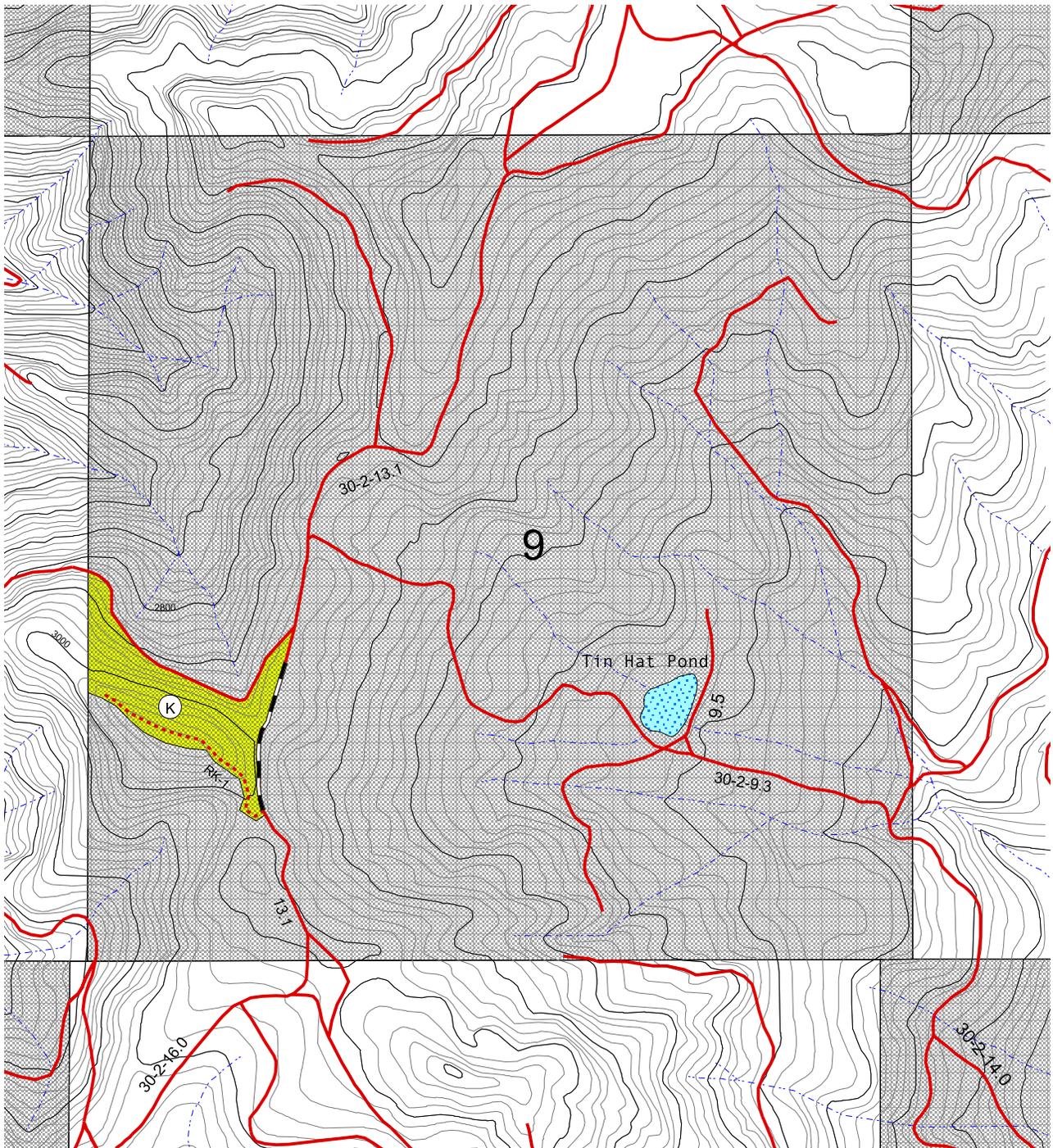
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-  Existing Road
-  100' Contour
-  20' Contour
-  Stream

-  Proposed Thinning Area
-  O&C Land
-  PD Land
-  Private Land

HURRICANE RUBY COMMERCIAL THINNING



T30S R2W

Willamette Meridian, Roseburg, OR.



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-  Existing Road
-  Road To Be Renovated
-  Construct, Decommission
-  100' Contour
-  20' Contour
-  Stream
-  Proposed Thinning Area
-  O&C Land
-  Private Land