

**Kola's Ridge Thinning
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-98-12**

Date Prepared: May 9, 2000

Quarry Development Decision Record

Decision: It is my decision to authorize development of a quarry in the NE¹/₄ NE¹/₄ of Section 27, T. 30 S., R. 9 W., W.M. Aggregate from this quarry would be used for surfacing of roads in the area which are scheduled for renovation under a Jobs in the Woods contract in the summer of 2000. Additional material would be stockpiled for future road maintenance and construction needs.

Rationale for the Decision:

This decision is based upon the following: The Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (June, 1995) identifies the need for development of new quarries in locations consistent with overall management objectives and where no other reasonable alternatives exist (p. 67). Alternative 2, the proposed alternative, allows for development of a source of aggregate for road surfacing in proximity to roads to be renovated, consistent with management and restoration objectives. There are no other suitable sources of aggregate available in the immediate area. Development of the quarry would reduce the possibility that noxious weed seeds or material contaminated with the fungus responsible for Port-Orford-cedar root rot disease would be imported onto site with aggregate from an outside source. Alternative 1, the no action alternative, would not meet these objectives.

Comments on this analysis were received from one individual and four organizations. No issues relative to the quarry development were identified which constituted new information or which were not addressed. The following points of clarification are provided. The information for these points of clarification is contained in the environmental assessment or documents referenced in the environmental assessment.

1. A comment was received which questioned whether or not the BLM had considered the cumulative effects of dust from quarry development on sediment delivery to aquatic systems. The environmental analysis did not address dust because the effects were considered to be inconsequential. The Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* addressed road generated dust (Chapter 4-9) in a discussion relative to air quality. It states that "Dust from new road construction and maintenance of older unpaved roads normally settles within a short distance from the point of origin. It has a negligible effect away from construction and maintenance sites. Dust associated with road use also has negligible effect away from unpaved roads.

The District geotechnical engineer confirms that the effects of road dust on water quality are not measurable and that in most cases the impacts of dust are limited to a distance of 50-to-75 feet from road surfaces. Vegetation would filter out any overland transport of these minute amounts of dust before they would reach any streams and have any impact on the sediment regime. The hydrologist concurs with this evaluation and adds that dust generated in the summer months would accumulate on vegetation and with the onset of fall rains would be deposited directly in place at the ground surface.

The site of the proposed quarry is located 335 feet slope distance above a non-fishbearing stream, as measured in the field. No measurable quantities of dust from quarry development and operation is expected to reach the stream. The direct benefits of aggregate surfacing of roads in reducing sedimentation caused by surface run-off and erosion of natural surface roads far outweigh the negligible indirect affects to water quality from the dust that might be generated.

2. A comment questioned whether there had been an adequate evaluation of the effects of the quarry because the area to be developed had been described as one-to-two acres. Resource specialists evaluated the entire site proposed for the quarry and considered the impacts of the maximum potential development.

The overall scope of the quarry development is small. As illustrated in Table 1 on page 4 of Upper Middle Fork Coquille Watershed Analysis (USDI, BLM. May 25, 1999) there are 25,960 acres administered by the BLM in this fifth-field watershed analysis unit. The difference between one acre and two acres is the equivalent of 0.0038 percent of the total acres administered by the BLM and is considered to be insignificant.

3. A question was raised concerning whether or not surveys were conducted for Survey and Manage species. In a discussion of the affected environment found on page 9 of the environmental assessment it is noted that the site of the quarry is an early-seral stand dominated by hardwoods. It was determined that the site did not constitute suitable habitat for red tree voles, Del Norte salamanders and terrestrial mollusk species because the late-successional and old-growth conifer forest habitat that the species utilize is not present. Completed botanical surveys of the site have not identified the presence of any special status species or any Protection Buffer and Survey and Manage species for which surveys are required by the Northwest Forest Plan.
4. The environmental assessment states on page 6 that “No noxious weed problems were noted in the project area, so non-native, invasive species are expected to be unaffected by either alternative”. This statement does not mean that noxious weeds are absent from the project area and that the problem of noxious weeds has not been considered. The Roseburg District has a strategic plan for dealing with Noxious Weeds addressed in the Roseburg District *Integrated Weed Control Plan* and Environmental Assessment (USDI, Roseburg District, 1995). This environmental assessment is tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program*

Environmental Impact Statement (USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Washington Office, Washington, D.C. 1985) and *The Supplemental Record of Decision for the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Washington Office, Washington, D.C. 1987). Implementation of the District *Integrated Weed Control Plan* in conjunction with mitigation will help stabilize present rates of weed establishment and spread.

Potential mitigation identified in the *Integrated Weed Control Plan* includes surfacing with aggregate known to be weed-free, and pressure-washing or steam-cleaning excavation and road construction equipment prior to move-in on the project site. No noxious weeds have been identified on the site proposed for quarry development, and the quarry development contract will require equipment washing in its provisions. The purpose of washing equipment is to remove potentially contaminated soil and prevent its introduction onto the project site. Potential contamination could consist of weed seed as well as the fungus responsible for Port-Orford-cedar root rot disease. Equipment washing has been identified as an effective method in preventing the spread of both of these problems.

Compliance and Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 84, 190, 191, and 195-198).

Protest and Appeals Procedures: As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in the News Review.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date