South River Commercial Thinning 2003
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-03-01

Decision Documentation
Prepared: November 12, 2003

Decision:

It is my decision to offer Wasted Days Commercial Thinning. This decision partially implements Alternative Three, described on pages 9 and 10 of the EA, with the following exceptions. Thinning operations will be seasonally restricted to the dry season, as described for Alternative Two and illustrated in Table 3 on page 7 of the EA. All spur road construction will be of a temporary nature, with construction and use consistent with conditions described on page 8 of the EA. Road improvements to be implemented are described below.

The thinning project consists of seven units, totaling 106 acres with an additional three acres of right-of-way for spur road construction. The units are located in Sections 23, 25 and 35 of T. 29 S., R. 3 W., W.M. (maps attached). Approximately 87 acres, including the right-of-way acres, are allocated as General Forest Management Area or Connectivity/Diversity Block within the Matrix. Density management will be applied to approximately 22 acres of Riparian Reserves.

Thinning in the Matrix allocations will yield approximately 1,254 MBF of timber, equivalent to 2,532 CCF, toward the annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the Roseburg District The volume of timber to be derived from density management in Riparian Reserves is approximately 278 MBF, equivalent to 562 CCF, and is not chargeable toward the ASQ. It is anticipated that there will be additional volume modified into the sale as a result of the need to cut tailhold, guyline, and corridor trees.

Six spur roads will be constructed, and an existing landing on private land will be renovated. This temporary construction will total 3,320 feet, or approximately 0.63 miles. As addressed on page 8 of the EA, the intent is to construct, use and decommission temporary roads within the same operational season. If events prevent the use and decommissioning of a road in the same season as it is constructed, the BLM may winterize the road, at its discretion, and allow use the following year.

Approximately 5.9 miles of permanent roads will be renovated. This renovation will include blading and shaping of road surfaces, cleaning and reshaping ditches, roadside brushing, replacing many of the existing cross-drain culverts, and culvert cleaning. The following road improvements will be made to address water quality and erosion problems identified in the EA. The stream crossing culvert on the intermittent stream near the junction of Road Nos. 29-3-27.0 and 29-3-33.0 will be replaced with a larger culvert which will be armored with riprap at both the inflow and outflow to prevent further bank erosion and channel down-cutting.

Additional cross-drain culverts and other drainage structures will be installed along Road Nos. 29-3-27.0, 29-3-35.0, 29-3-35.2 and 29-3-35.4 to disperse ditch runoff onto adjacent slopes, rather than concentrate delivery directly into streams. Road surfacing will be limited to the repair of those areas where culverts are replaced or installed.

To reduce the probability of introducing new infestations of noxious weeds into the project area, pressure washing or steam cleaning of all logging and road building equipment will be required prior to move-in. If, at any time during the life of the timber sale contract, equipment is removed from the sale area, it will be cleaned prior to being returned to the sale area.

Surveys were conducted for those Special Status and Special Attention, vascular and non-vascular botanical species identified on pages 23 and 24 of the EA, in the Spring of 2003. *Ramalina thrausta*, a lichen, was found in the Riparian Reserve adjoining Days Creek at the bottom of Unit A. The site has been protected by the establishment of a 100-foot radius buffer.

Thinning units were evaluated for the presence of suitable habitat for the Crater Lake tightcoil snail (*Pristoloma articum crateris*) and Chace sideband snail (*Monadenia chaceana*). It was determined that no suitable habitat is present. There were no other Special Attention wildlife species for which surveys were indicated or required.

Rationale for the Decision:

Management direction in the Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP 1995) specifies " . . . commercial thinning in the matrix where practical and where research indicates increased gains in timber production are likely." (p. 62) Density management in Riparian Reserves is necessary to ". . . help achieve controlled stocking, establishment of desired non-conifer vegetation, and the desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy." (pp. 153-154)

As described on page 2 of the EA, chargeable volume is needed to attain the District ASQ and the socio-economic objectives of the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. It will also help to meet the requirement of the O&C Act to provide sustained production of timber. Alternative One, the "No Action" alternative will not meet these needs.

Comments on the EA were received from three organizations, and considered in the preparation of this decision. No issues or concerns were identified which were not already considered and addressed in the EA, or which constituted new information that would change the conclusions of the analysis.

The BLM has made a determination of "No Effect" on the northern spotted owl for disturbance. None of the units are within ¼-mile of an owl activity center and thinning operations would occur outside of nesting season, so the potential for disturbance is considered unlikely. Thinning will only occur in stands that may provide foraging and dispersal habitat. No nesting habitat would be affected. Although thinning will modify habitat and alter its utility, this will be

short term because canopy closure is expected to return to pre-thinning levels within ten years. As a consequence, the BLM has made a determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for habitat modification. In the FY 2003-2008 Programmatic Biological Opinion (Log No. 1-15-03-F-160, pp. 2-3), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with these determinations.

Oregon Coast coho salmon and Oregon Coast steelhead trout utilize Days Creek, immediately downslope of Units A and B. In this stream reach, Days Creek is also classified as Essential Fish Habitat. The sole potential effect to coho salmon, steelhead trout and Essential Fish Habitat would be associated with sediment. Given the project design features to be implemented, the BLM has determined that the likelihood for increased sediment levels is less then negligible and that the project is a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for coho salmon and steelhead trout. The project was determined to have no adverse affect on Essential Fish Habitat. In a letter dated November 5, 2003, NOAA/Fisheries concurred with this finding.

Monitoring:

Monitoring would be done in accordance with provisions contained in Appendix I of the ROD/RMP (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199). Monitoring efforts would be targeted at the following resources: Riparian Reserves; Matrix; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat.

Protest Procedures:

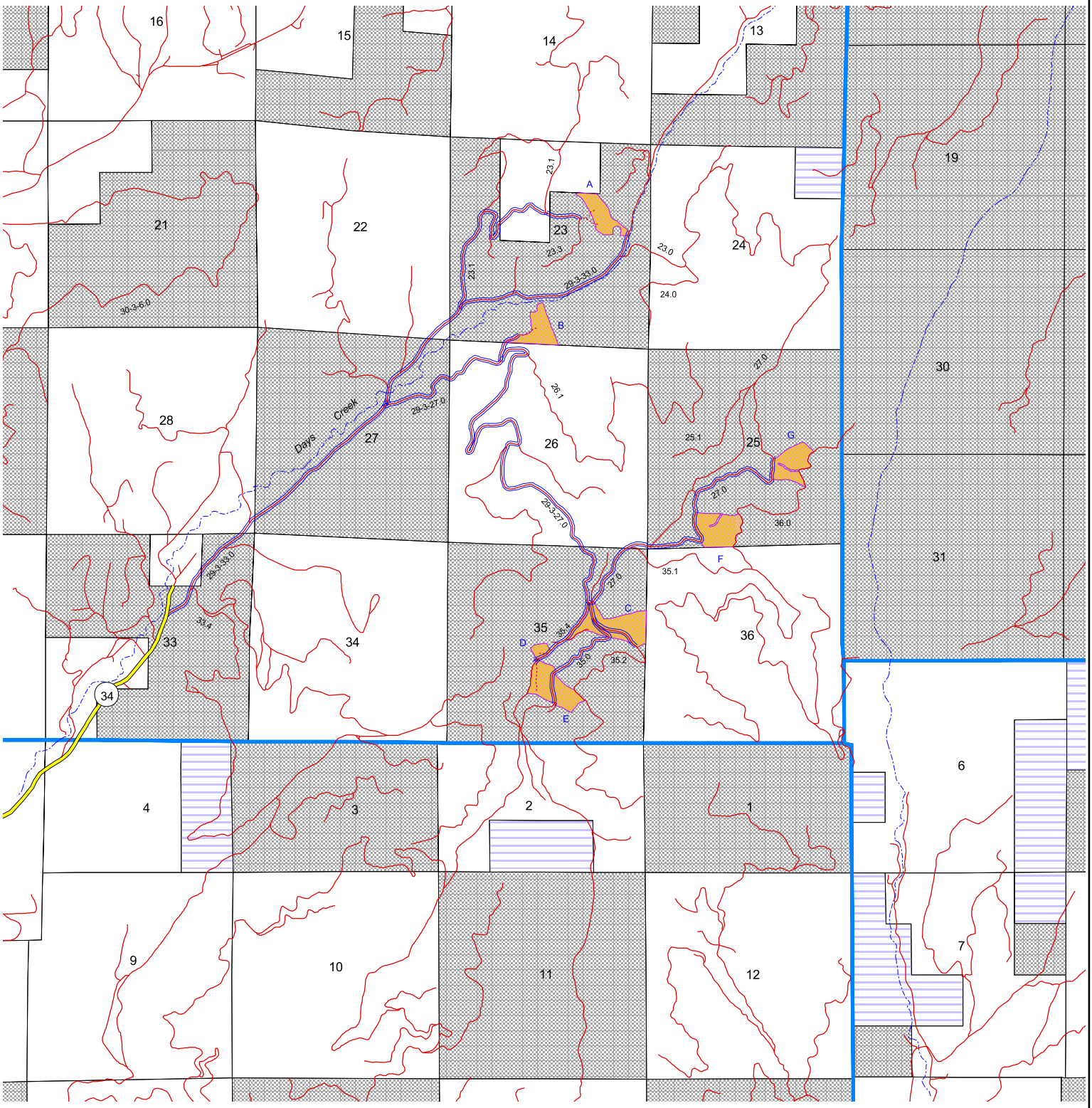
As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 Administrative Remedies at § 5003.3 (a) and (b), protests may be made within 15 days of the publication date of a notice of sale. Publication of such notice in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon, constitutes the decision date from which such protests may be filed. Protests 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

11/17/03
Date

WASTED DAYS

Commercial Thinning



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T29S R3W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

0 1 Miles

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of this data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data was compiled from various sources. This information may be updated without notification.

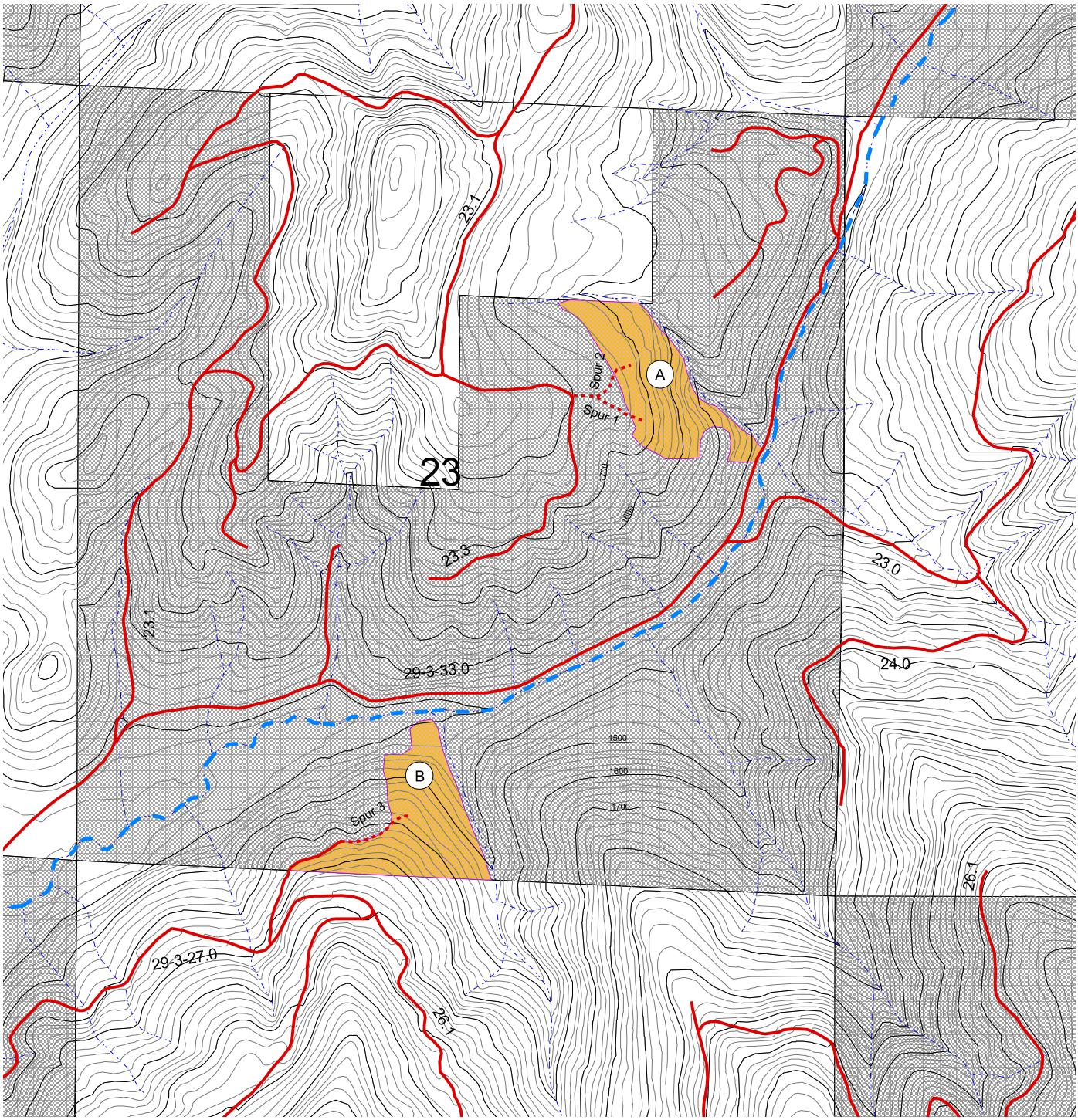
Paved Highway
Existing Road
Access\Haul Route
Spur to be Constructed

Thinning Area
BLM (O&C) Land
BLM (PD) Land
Private Land

10-28-2003

WASTED DAYS

Commercial Thinning



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Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

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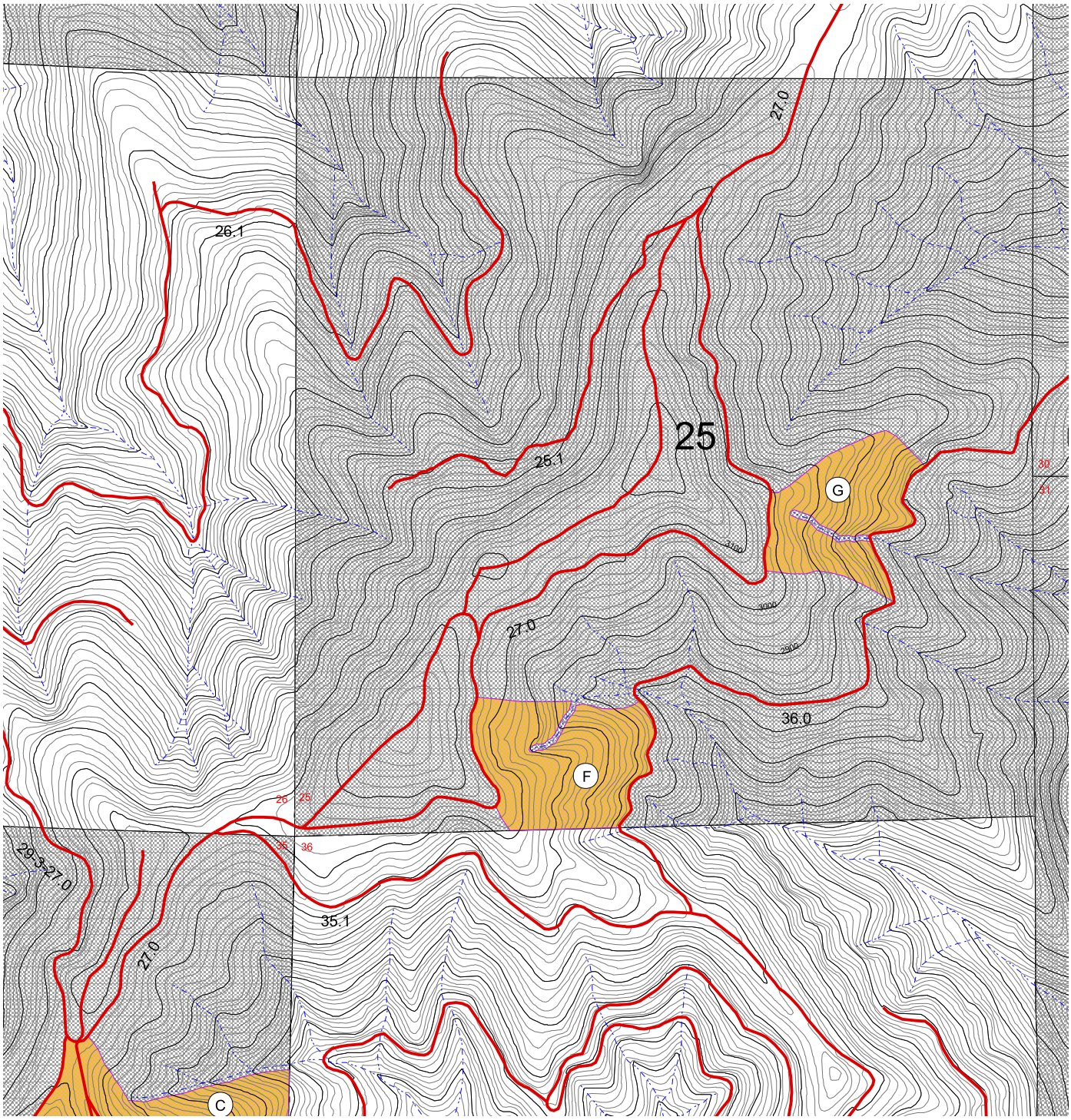
Existing Road
Construct, Decommission
Stream
Fish Bearing Stream
100' Contour
20' Contour

Thinning Area
BLM (O&C) Land
Private Land

10-28-2003

WASTED DAYS

Commercial Thinning



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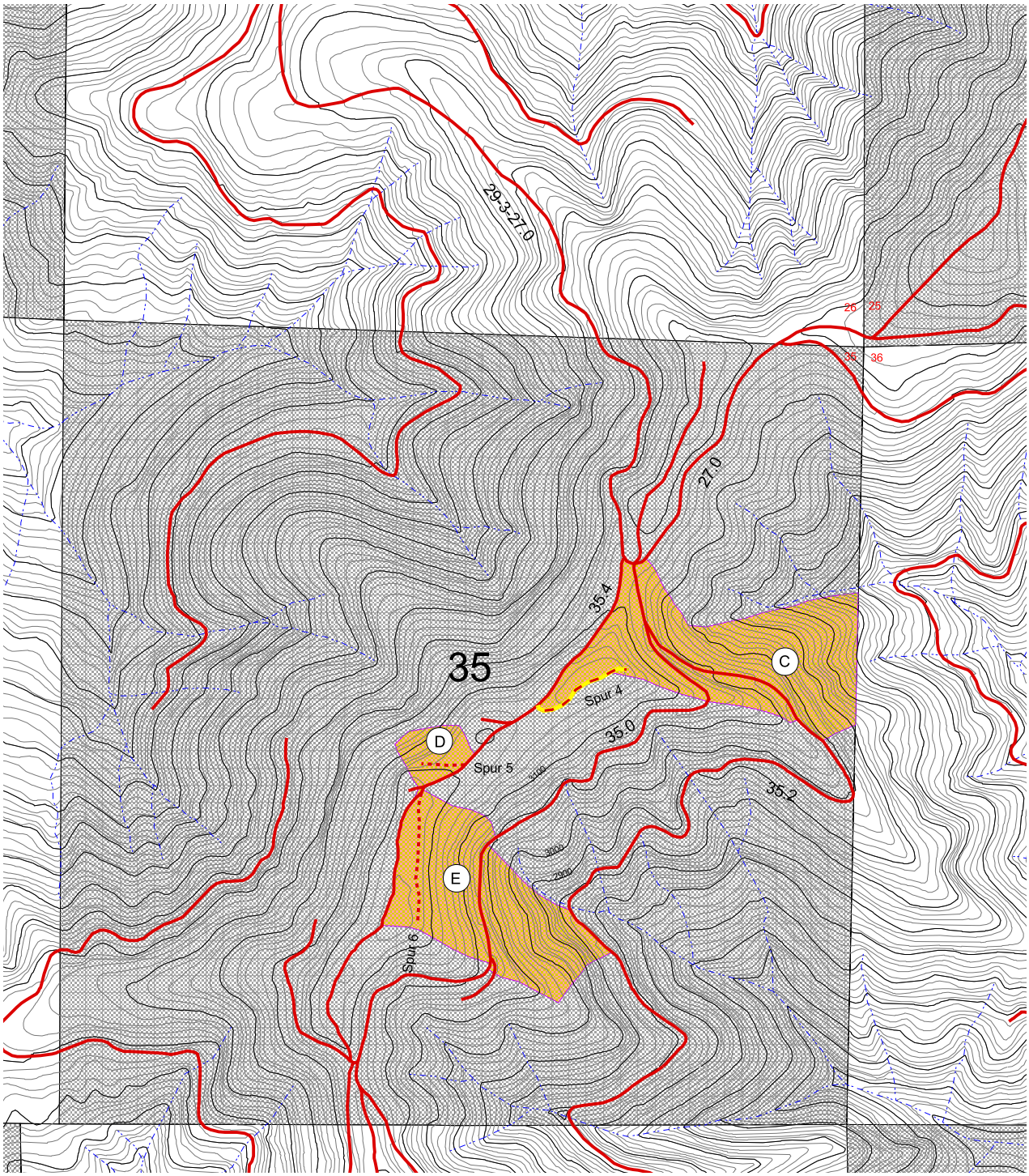
Existing Road
Stream
100' Contour
20' Contour

Thinning Area
BLM (O&C) Land
Private Land

10-28-2003

WASTED DAYS

Commercial Thinning



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T29S R3W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

1000 0 1000 Feet

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Existing Road
Construct, Decommission
Renovate, Decommission
Stream
100' Contour
20' Contour

Thinning Area
BLM (O&C) Land
Private Land

10-28-2003