

**South River Commercial Thinning 2000
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-98-12**

Prepared: October 23, 2001

Decision Documentation

Decision: It is my decision to offer Weaver Road Commercial Thinning, partially implementing Alternative 2 as described in the EA (p. 3-5). This decision authorizes the commercial thinning of four units, identified as B, C, E3 and E5 in the EA. These units are all located in Section 19, T. 28 S., R. 8 W., W.M. (map attached).

The configuration of units offered for sale differs slightly from those shown in the EA. For the purpose of analysis, prospective unit boundaries were designated based on stand composition and age. Unit B is a 35-to-40-year old stand dominated by Douglas-fir that extends south to Road No. 28-8-20.1, along most of the portion designated for renovation. Unit E5 is an 85-to-90-year old stand dominated by western hemlock and bounded on the north by Road No. 28-8-20.1, except in the northeast corner of the unit where it crosses the road. Rather than isolate a small strip of Unit B, resulting in contractual and administrative complications, the portion located between Road No. 28-8-20.1 and an intermittent stream to the north was combined with Unit E5. This recombination does not change the prescriptions and conditions set forth in the EA, nor does it represent any new circumstances that would alter the conclusions of the analysis.

Thinning in the General Forest Management Area will total approximately 110 acres. An additional acre of right-of-way will be cut for construction of temporary spur roads and Road No. 28-8-19.9. Another 2 acres are marked for individual tree removal associated with the renovation of portions of Road Nos. 28-8-19.1 and 28-8-20.1. These treatments will yield approximately 2,208 MBF of timber, equivalent to 4,168 CCF, toward the annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) for the Roseburg District. Density management in Riparian Reserves will total approximately 25 acres. The volume of timber derived from these treatments is approximately 299 MBF, equivalent to 568 CCF, and is not chargeable toward the ASQ. It is anticipated that there will be some additional volume 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 identified in the EA (pp. 16-17). None of these species were located in surveys of Units B, C, E3 and E5. A fungus found in Unit C and initially identified as *Craterellus tubaeformis*, was submitted to Oregon State University for verification. It was determined that the fungus was not *Craterellus tubaeformis*, and does not require protection.

Suitable habitat criteria contained in "Survey Protocol for the Red Tree Vole v2.0", and described in the EA (p. 14), were used to determine which units required surveys. Of the four units offered in this commercial thinning, only Unit E5 met these criteria. The results of the surveys were negative.

Access will be provided by existing roads and a combination of permanent and temporary road construction. Permanent construction of Road No. 28-8-19.9 will total 0.16 miles. The road will be located on a broad, stable ridge. There will be 6 temporary spur roads, totaling 0.60 miles. These temporary roads will be constructed, used and decommissioned in the same operating season. Decommissioning will be accomplished by BLM personnel. A total of 2.63 miles of existing roads will be renovated. Road No. 28-2-19.1 will be renovated, with installation of culverts for drainage and aggregate surfacing from the junction with Road No. 28-8-18.0 to the junction with Road No. 28-8-19.9. Segments B3 of Road No. 28-8-20.1 will be renovated and surfaced from the junction of Road No. 28-8-19.6 to the section line between Sections 19 and 20. Road No. 28-8-19.8 and Segment B1 of Road No. 28-8-20.1 will be renovated to their original condition, then closed following the completion of thinning operations.

In order to reduce the likelihood of the introduction of Port-Orford-cedar root disease or spread of noxious weeds into the project area, pressure washing or steam cleaning of all logging and road building equipment will be required prior to being moved into the sale area, or at any time when the equipment is removed from the area and later returned.

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 commercial thinning of stands under 80 years of age to assure high levels of volume productivity (p. 151). Alternative 2, the proposed alternative, 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.

The project area is located within the 35-50 mile management zone for the marbled murrelet. Two-year protocol surveys were conducted, during which two detections were made near the southeast corner of Section 19. No stand occupancy or other use of forest stands in the area could be established. The BLM made a determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" on modification of suitable habitat and conferred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this project. A letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (File Name: 1-15-01-1-270) was received on May 31, 2001, in response to a BLM request for written concurrence on effects determinations for FY 2001-2002 Programmatic Assessments for Activities Not Likely to Adversely Affect Listed Species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the BLM that the action was not likely to adversely affect murrelet habitat because no constituent elements

of habitat would be removed, and that the habitat would be expected to function as intended. Because the murrelet detections were made within approximately ¼-mile of Unit E3, the potential to affect murrelets would still exist in the form of disturbance. In order to address potential noise disturbance, daily operational restrictions will be implemented for this unit. These restrictions will be in effect from April 1st to August 5th and prohibit the beginning of thinning operations until two (2) hours after sunrise, and require that operations cease two (2) hours before sunset.

There are no fish species in the project area that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. There is no Essential Fish Habitat in the project area. The nearest Essential Fish Habitat is located between 12 and 15 miles downstream, behind natural barriers to passage by anadromous fish, and there are no anticipated consequences of the project which would have any effect on Essential Fish Habitat.

Compliance and Monitoring:

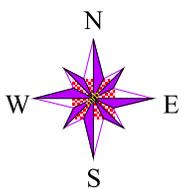
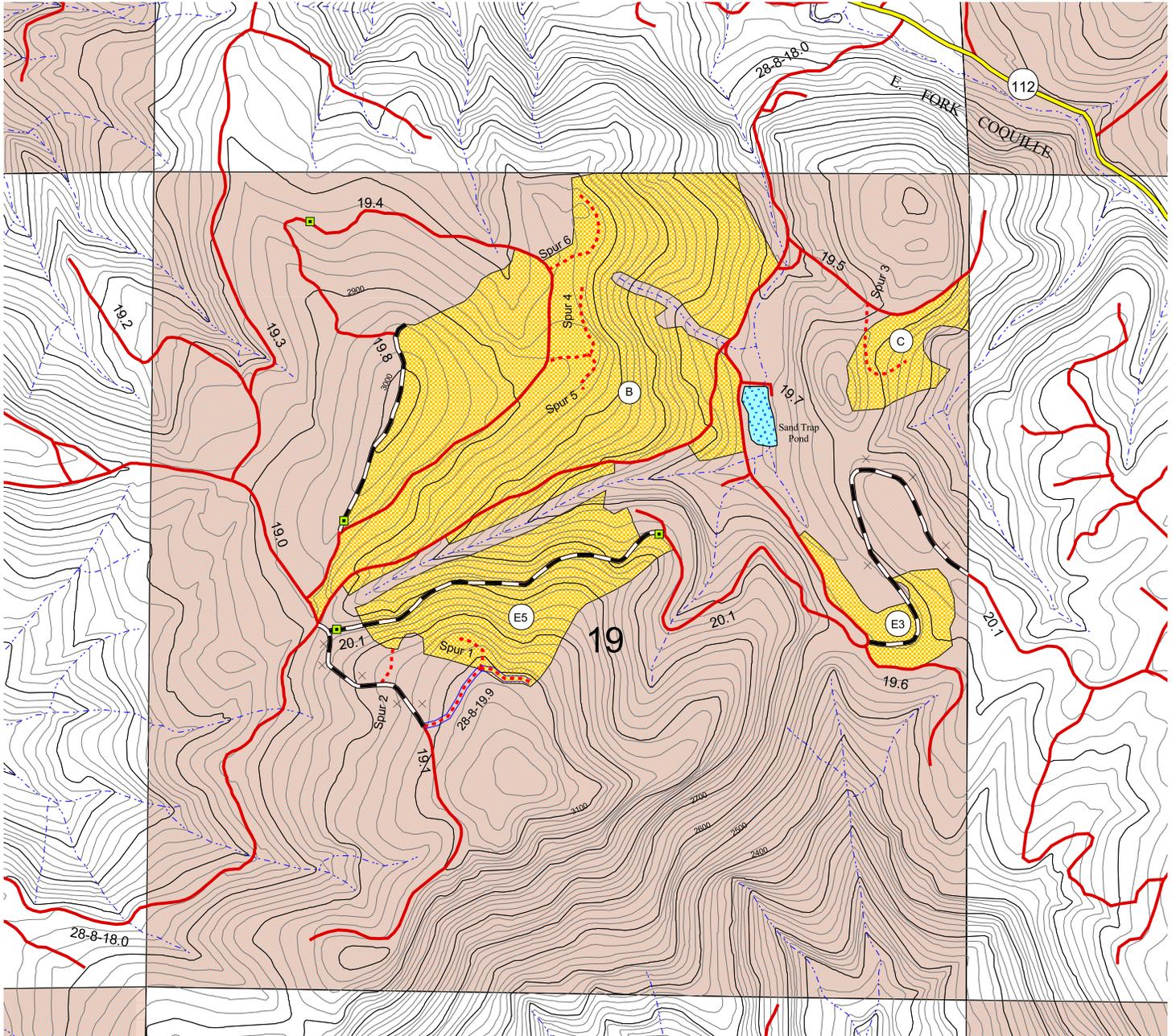
Monitoring would be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199). Monitoring efforts would be targeted at the following resources: Riparian Reserves; Matrix; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Fish Habitat; and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat.

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 publication date of the 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

WEAVER ROAD COMMERCIAL THINNING



T28S, R8W

Willamette Meridian, Roseburg, OR.



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- × TREES MARKED FOR CUTTING
- CONSTRUCT ROADBLOCK
- EXISTING ROAD
- RENOVATE, PERMANENT/ROCK
- CONSTRUCT, PERMANENT/ROCK
- CONSTRUCT, DECOMMISSION
- 100' CONTOUR
- 20' CONTOUR
- STREAM
- THINNING AREA
- PRIVATE LAND
- BLM (GOOS WAGON RD.) LAND