

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA NUMBER: OR105-96-16

BLM Office: South River Resource Area, Roseburg District.
Proposed Action Title: Red Top Salvage Phase I.
Location of Proposed Action. Secs. 23 and 26, T.28S.,R.3W; and
Secs. 4,5,8,9,16, and 17, T.29S.,R.2W.

Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan

This proposed action conforms to the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan dated, June 1995. (ROD/RMP)

Need for Proposed Action:

Severe winter storms in Dec. 1995, and January and February 1996, caused extensive damage, blowdown and broken trees, to the forest stands in the headwaters of the Deadman, Days Creek, Coffee Creek, Myrtle Creek, and Cavitt Creek drainages. All stands regardless of stand age and/or size were affected. The blowdown covers several hundred acres and is estimated to be from 5 to 12 MMBF of timber. The areas are in Matrix lands and Adaptive Management Areas (AMA). Deadman, Coffee and Days Creek are Tier 1 Watersheds.

Following is a breakdown of land use allocations:

Location	LUA
T.28S., R.3W., Sec. 23 S1/2SE1/4	Adaptive Management Area (AMA).
T.28S., R.3W., Sec. 26 NE1/4NE1/4	Adaptive Management Area (AMA).
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 4	GFMA. Cultural resource areas in this section.
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 5	GFMA.
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 8	GFMA. Some withdrawn areas.
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 9	Connectivity.
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 16	GFMA.
T.29S., R.2W., Sec. 17	Connectivity.

The large amount of blowdown and damaged trees provides conditions for insect infestations and increased fire hazard. Volume loss can also be expected over the next few years as the wind throw and damaged trees succumb to the natural processes of decay. The younger stands with the small diameter timber will have substantial loss of volume in the next two years if trees are not harvested. Salvaging this timber is needed to reduce the fire hazard, the potential for insect infestation and volume loss.

Description of the Proposed Action

The South River Resource area proposes to salvage blowdown and storm damaged trees on approximately 775 acres in the Red Top Pond area in Secs. 4,5,8,9,16, and 17 of T.29S.,R.2W.; plus a small area in section 23 and 26 of T.28S., R.3W. that has considerable blowdown and broken topped trees. The salvage will be accomplished by the following actions:

1. Final Regeneration Harvest. Two units in sections 16 and 17, T. 29S., R.2W., approximately 130 acres, have been identified for final harvest. These units are in Connectivity except for approximately 5 acres in section 16 which is in GFMA. One stand of trees 28 inches in dbh and larger was severely damaged by the storm. The tops of many of the standing trees have been broken out leaving a short snag or a tree with a few green limbs below the break. There is also considerable blowdown in the stand. The other unit is a young stand in the 16 to 20 inch diameter range that was commercially thinned about 7 years ago. Damage was heavy in this stand. Many trees were blown down and many were broken off 10 to 50 feet above the ground.

There are existing roads to these units that will be used to yard and haul the timber. A temporary spur, approximately 1200ft, off the 29-2-8.0 road is required to log the unit to the west of the 8.0 road. The road follows an existing jeep road on the ridge top for most of the way. Harvesting will be done with a cable system. The units will be reforested following harvest starting with site preparation by broadcast burning to reduce the brush competition and slash and to prepare planting spots. Broadcast burning should be limited to slopes less than 70%. The units would be planted with a mix of conifer species of Douglas-fir, sugar pine and incense-cedar.

2. Salvage Matrix lands. There are approximately 645 acres on the ridge between Road No. 28-2-32.0 on the east and Road No. 29-2-4.0 and Road No. 29-2-8.0 roads on the west, and from Red Top Pond south to Deer Springs Thinning which has considerable blowdown. The salvage is located on approximately 185 acres in Sections 4, 5, and 8 which are classed as General Forest Management Areas and approximately 75 acres in Sections 9 and 17 which are classed as Connectivity.

The timber in this area consists of stands of young trees in the 12 to 16 inch diameter range and mature stands 20+ inches and larger. The majority of the salvage will come from the mature stands. However, there are several small areas within the younger stands which were heavily damaged which will be salvaged.

This area will be salvaged using a cable system or ground based equipment to a limited extent to remove the blowdown and damaged trees. Approximately 1 mile of temporary road(s) and approximately 1 mile of existing dirt road will be needed to

salvage the trees. Best Management Practices (BMP) would be applied during road construction. The road(s) will be kept to a minimum width needed to get logging equipment in. Road clearing should not exceed 20 feet in width except for additional width for curves and turnouts. Some standing green trees may have to be cut in the right of way to get adequate width for the road. These roads would be constructed, used, tilled and reseeded in the same dry season. Also, the 29-2-9.4 road which is a spur off of Road No. 28-2-32.0 road and extends for about 1/4 mile to the ridge will be tilled and seeded upon completion of logging. Landings will be located along the roads at approximately 200 foot intervals. Yarding corridors will be as narrow as possible with a maximum width of 20 feet. Some standing green trees will be cut in yarding corridors to facilitate the removal of the salvage timber.

The area in sections 23 and 26, approximately 10 acres in Adaptive Management Area, is next to the road and may be yarded to the road. The timber varies from young trees 16 to 20 inches in diameter to mature trees 28 inches in diameter and larger.

Critical Elements of the Human Environment

<u>Potentially Critical Elements</u>	<u>Affected</u>		<u>Specialists Initials</u>
	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	
Air Quality	X		WHA
ACECs	X		WHA
Cultural Resources		X	JLB
Environmental Justice	X		WHA
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	X		DEH
Floodplains	X		DEH
Nat. Amer. Rel. Concerns	X		JLB
T & E Species		X	EMD, JCH
Waste, Hazardous/Solid	X		S. J. Lee
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X		DEH
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X		SS
Wilderness	X		CB

Description of Potential Impacts/Mitigation:

Cultural Resources - In the project area there are four known archeological sites. Three of the sites have been evaluated and two of them have been determined significant. The significant sites will be posted out of the sale area. The unevaluated site will also be posted out of the sale.

T and E Plant Species - Two plant species, Buxbaumia viridis and Allotropia virgata have been found in the project area. (See Botany

Survey Report dated Sept. 16, 1996) A buffer approximately 110 feet will be marked between the Buxbaumia viridis site and the temporary road. The road will be kept to the west side of the ridge as far as possible and the road width will be held to a minimum through this area. Minimal standing trees will be cut for the road and only the portions of down trees in the buffer that extend into the road right-of-way will be cut and removed. The buffer will extend out 150 feet from the plant in the other directions.

A buffer has been marked around Allotropia virgata.

T and E Wildlife Species - Of the terrestrial species federally listed as endangered or threatened in the Roseburg District, only the Northern Spotted Owl is known to occur within the project area. The entire project area is located beyond the 50 mile inland range for the marbled murrelet and beyond the known range of the Columbian White-tailed Deer. The bald eagle and peregrine falcon have the potential to occur in the project area but neither is expected.

The general salvage area overlaps the provincial home range of six Northern Spotted Owl sites (see Wildlife report date Nov 12, 1996). Of these six (6) sites only Deadman Mtn. (MSNO-2291) is below the "incidental take" threshold prior to any harvest at both the 1.2 mile and 0.7 mile range. The amount of suitable habitat available for the Deadman Mtn. site within the 1.2 mile range is greater than shown in the table since data on that part of the home range located on U.S. Forest Service lands is not included.

Regeneration harvest of blowdown and green trees within 1.2 miles of master site 4046 (Grateful Dead) will reduce suitable habitat by 130 acres. Suitable habitat after harvest will remain above the "incidental take" threshold level at the 1.2 mile range but falls below the 500 acre level within the 0.7 mile range.

Salvage of blowdown throughout the balance of the project area with, the exception of trees being cut to clear yarding corridors and the construction of about one mile of temporary roads, is not expected to reduce suitable habitat.

In summary, the overall impact to the Northern Spotted Owl is considered to be a "may affect likely to adversely affect" by removal of 130 acres of suitable habitat.

The following mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce the impacts on suitable habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl and bats.

1. Road width will be held to a minimum (14 to 16 ft). Clearing width should not exceed 20 feet except where

turnouts are needed.

2. Yarding roads will be as narrow as possible with a maximum width of 20 feet.

3. Yarding roads will be a minimum of 200 feet apart.

4. The shake sided stable in section 17 would be protected during harvest as it could provide roosting habitat for bats.

5. The additional Terms and Conditions from the forthcoming Biological Opinion would be applied.

T and E Fish Species - The Umpqua River cutthroat trout (URCT) has been listed by the National Marine Fisheries Service as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended. Cutthroat trout are present in the Deadman Creek, the Days Creek and the Coffee Creek Watersheds. There are no fish-bearing streams in or adjacent to the proposed action. The cutthroat trout are located downstream of the proposed action and could be indirectly impacted by the action.

This is a "May affect, likely to adversely affect" action on the URCT. According to the Biological Opinion received on 30 September 1996, NMFS believes the incidental take of URCT likely to occur as a result of the proposed action has been adequately minimized by project design and mitigation.

Sensitive Fish Species - The Coastal coho salmon and the West Coast steelhead have been "proposed" as threatened species under ESA. These species are located down stream of the proposed action and would be indirectly impacted by the action. The action would not appreciably reduce the survival or recovery of the salmon and steelhead resulting in a "no jeopardy" determination. Informal conferencing has been initiated for these species with NMFS for concurrence of the "no jeopardy" determination.

Riparian Reserves - Riparian Reserves and wet areas have been identified within the project area.

Other concerns

This area has been used in the past as a trail for horse riders. A trail from Red Top Pond to the Deer Springs horse barn has been used for many years. The trail is on the ridge between the 32.0 road and the 4.0 road. At present the blowdown on the trail makes the trail impassable to horses. Salvaging the blowdown would open up the trail for use. The temporary roads needed to harvest the salvage will follow the horse trail for most of the

distance. The existing horse trail will be eliminated for all intents and purposes by the construction of the temporary roads. Upon completion of the logging the roads will be tilled and seeded. The roads could then be used as a horse trail and in time would provide the same type of experience as it has in the past.

To maintain and restore the visual quality of the area and mitigate impacts, consideration must be taken during operations and in final clean-up of activity areas and decommissioning of roads.

Reduction of the snag component in this area that existed prior to the windstorms could be a concern as a result of the salvage operations. Loss of snags will reduce foraging, roosting and nest habitat for woodpeckers, bats and cavity dependent species. Worker safety will require that snags which are a safety hazard will be felled. Yarding corridors should be placed away from existing snags where possible. Snags should be reserved to meet cavity dweller requirements and to minimize loss due to safety concerns.

Agencies and Persons Consulted.

US Fish and Wildlife Service
State Historic Preservation Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
Gary Basham, Area Special Plant Coordinator
Isaac Barner, District Archeologist
Dave Mathweg, Area Recreation Planner
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T.28 S. R.3 W



Red Top Salvage Timber Sale

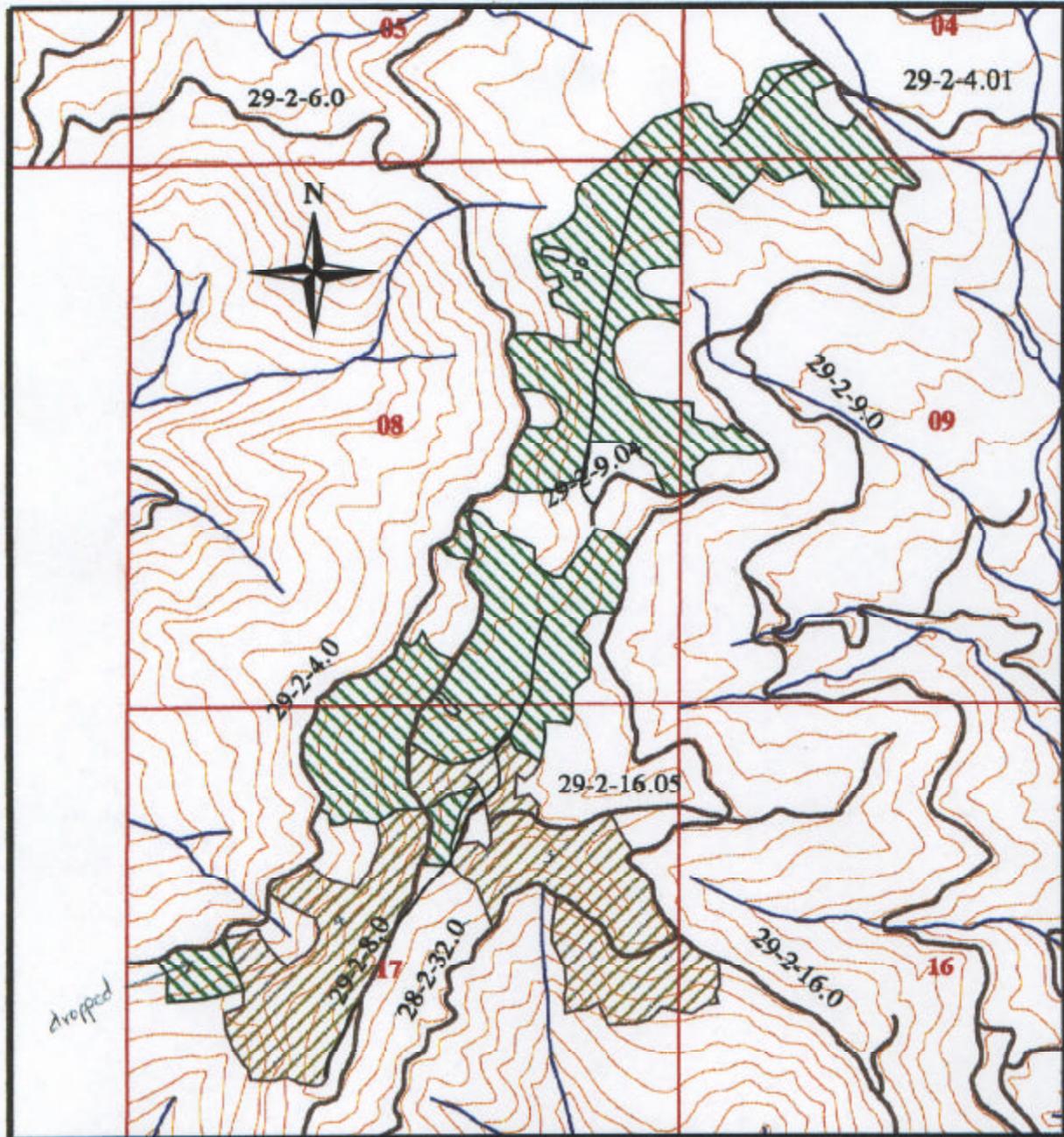
-  ROADS
-  SALVAGE UNITS
-  PUBLIC LAND SURVEY
-  BLM OWNERSHIP
-  STREAMS
-  100' CONTOURS

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 Feet



Oct. 28th, 1996

T. 29 S. R. 2 W.



Red Top Salvage Timber Sale

-  TEMPORARY ROADS
-  Public land survey
-  BLM ROADS
-  STREAMS
-  SALVAGE UNITS
-  HARVEST UNITS
-  100' CONTOURS

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 Feet



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