

FINAL DECISION DOCUMENTATION and DECISION RATIONALE

Fawn Creek Timber Sale Harvest and Reforestation Plan

Environmental Assessment Number OR080-99-15

Tract No. 01-503

USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office, Salem District, Cascades Resource Area

Sections 25, Township 8 South, Range 3 East;
Willamette Meridian

Marion County, Oregon

I. BACKGROUND

In 1999 and 2000, an IDT (interdisciplinary team) analyzed approximately 150 acres managed by the Cascades Resource Area, Salem District, BLM (Bureau of Land Management) for both regeneration harvest and density management. The areas analyzed were located within Section 25, Township 8 South, Range 3 East, and Section 30, Township 8 South, Range 4 East, Willamette Meridian; within the Connectivity land use allocation of the Little North Santiam Watershed. An environmental analysis was conducted and documented in the Fawn Creek Environmental Assessment (EA) Number OR080-99-15.

The stands analyzed for harvest contain primarily mature Douglas-fir between 70-130 years old with diameters from 7" to 44" DBH (diameter breast height). Western hemlock can be found in pockets scattered through the stands. The stands have been commercially thinned several times between 1960 and 1985 and there are few residual snags or large woody debris on the forest floor. (EA pp. 18 and 19).

Approximately 180 acres were eliminated from further consideration based on field reconnaissance. The Environmental Assessment documented one proposal to density management harvest approximately 146 acres within the Connectivity land use allocation and an additional 5 acres in the Riparian Reserve. A second proposal analyzed the regeneration harvest of 81 acres and the density management of 65 acres within the Connectivity land use allocation and the density management of an additional 5 acres of Riparian Reserve. The proposed action also included topping trees to create snag habitat. Temporary road construction, road renovation, and road decommissioning were also part of the proposal.

A Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on August 18, 1999 and the EA and FONSI were made available for public review and comment on August 20, 1999.

Since the release of the EA, the interdisciplinary team has identified the need to update some information due to the results from component 2 (“Survey and Manage”) surveys, and further field reconnaissance. These changes to the proposed action are described in the following section which also describes any changes to the analysis and determination of effects as presented in the August 18, 1999 EA.

II MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED ACTION/ CHANGES TO AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Changes to the Proposed Action

1. *Unit acres* - Unit acres have been finalized based on unit traverse and sale layout. Acres were reduced after identifying additional “Survey and Manage” reserves based on the component 2 (Survey and Manage) survey results. The density management alternative was selected as the Proposed Action and harvest within the Riparian Reserve was dropped. Table 1 shows the changes in unit numbers, acres and reserve trees.

Unit Numbers		Unit Acres			Reserved Green Trees per Acre	
Current	EA	Current	EA	Change	Current	EA
1	B, D, E and F	58	88	-30	35	30-60
DROPPED	A	0	47	-47	0	30-60
DROPPED	C	0	11	-11	0	30-60
DROPPED	RR1	0	5	-5	0	
Total Density Management Harvest		58	151	-93		

2. *Timber volume* - Final timber volume estimates for the sale have been determined through a field timber cruise. Volumes have decreased from 6,770 hundred cubic feet (4,370 thousand board feet) to 5,713 hundred cubic feet (3,913 thousand board feet) for an overall decrease of 1,057 hundred cubic feet (457 thousand board feet). This decrease in volume is due to a reduction in harvest acres.
3. *Road Construction, Renovation and Decommissioning* - This road work was reduced primarily due to elimination on two harvest units. A breakdown of these changes is contained in Table 2.

Table 2: Change in Road Work

Category	Current	EA	Change
Construction	150 feet	2,400 feet	- 2,250 feet
Renovation	4.3 miles	5.0 miles	- 0.7 miles
Decommissioning	0 feet	5,100 feet	- 5,100 feet

The current road construction proposed under this Supplemental EA calls for the reconstruction of a portion of an existing road which experienced a shoulder failure. Repair work would involve moving the road into the bank from 2 to 20 feet, rocking the running surface, installing a culvert and armoring the fill shoulder with rock. Road renovation would remain the same and include such activities as brushing, grading, culvert replacement and flume placement to bring those roads back into condition to support log hauling. No road decommissioning would be performed under the current harvest proposal as those roads identified for decommissioning were all associated with the dropped harvest units and are now outside of the project area boundary. These roads will be included in a future road restoration project.

4. *Fire Trails* - The EA states that 5,200 feet of fire trails would be constructed. Approximately 12,500 feet of trails would actually be required to adequately protect reserve areas including 9 green tree retention islands from prescribed fire encroachment.

B. Changes to the Project Design Features/Mitigation Measures

No changes or additions were made to the Design Features and Mitigation Measures contained in the Fawn Creek EA.

C. Changes to the Affected Environment

Surveys were conducted for Special Status and Survey and Manage botany species according to prescribed protocols and one species of fungi was located in 6 different locations within the current harvest unit. All sightings are contained within a green tree protection island with a one sight tree buffer. Mollusk surveys were conducted according to established protocol and one sighting was found in the project area, but not in the current harvest unit. Red tree vole transects were conducted in all of the proposed harvest units and 8 trees were climbed, but no nests were found.

D. Changes to the Environmental Consequences

1. *Wildlife* - The current proposal would reduce the impact to wildlife due to a 93 acre decrease in the acres to be harvested. Delaying the decommissioning of 5,100 feet of existing roads until they can be treated under a future road restoration contract should not result in a increase in impacts to wildlife as vehicular access to the area is already controlled by several gates.
2. *Fisheries* - None of the changes in the proposed action would increase the effects of the project on Upper Willamette River steelhead or Upper Willamette River chinook salmon.
3. *Soils and Water* -There would be no measurable change in short term impacts to soil and water resources with the changes to the proposed action. Limiting yarding and hauling operations and all road work to the dry periods of the year (generally July 1 through November 1) would further reduce the risk of erosion and sedimentation from these activities.

III. DECISION

The decision to be made by the Cascades Resource Area Manager is whether or not to prepare an environmental impact statement, and whether to approve the Fawn Creek timber sale as proposed, not at all, or to some other extent.

Based on site-specific analysis in the Environmental Assessment, the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the Watershed Analysis (Little North Santiam) dated December 1997, as well as the management direction contained in the RMP (*Salem District Resource Management Plan*), dated May, 1995, I have decided to implement Alternative A of the Fawn Creek Environmental Assessment along with the Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures listed (EA pp. 5-17) with the modifications in Section II., above, hereafter referred to as the “selected action” (see attached map and Table 3 in Appendix A). The following is a summary of this decision:

1. **Density Management** harvest of approximately 58 acres of Connectivity lands from 1 unit. It is expected that this will yield approximately 5,713 hundred cubic feet (CCF).
2. **Tree Topping:** Up to four trees per acre would be topped within the proposed harvest unit to provide structural diversity, wildlife habitat and to improve wind firmness.
3. **Road Construction:** Approximately 150 feet of existing road would be relocated into the adjacent cut slop.

4. **Road Renovation:** Road maintenance or renovation (brushing, blading, culvert and flume placement) would occur on approximately 4.3 miles of existing road.

5. **Compliance with Direction**

The selected action is consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and programs (EA, pp. 4).

- a. The selected action is in conformance with the following documents which provide the legal framework, standards, and guidelines for management of BLM lands in the Cascades Resource Area:

- *Salem District Resource Management Plan (May 12, 1995)*
- *Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April, 1994)*
- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (SEIS, February, 1994)*
- *Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Final Environmental Impact Statement (VMFEIS, February 1989) and the Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Record of Decision (August 1992).*
- *Environmental Assessment to Change the Implementation Schedule for Survey and Manage and Protection Buffer Species (October 7, 1998)*
- *Plan Maintenance Documentation: Decision to Delay the Effective Date for Surveying 7 “Survey and Manage” and Protection Buffer Species (March 2000)*
- *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (January 2001).*

All of the above documents may be reviewed at the BLM Salem District office.

- b. Survey and Manage: The Component 2 surveys for this project are also in compliance with the Stipulation for Order Dismissing the Action (August 2, 1999) in the ONRC Action lawsuit¹.
- c. Monitoring activities related to this sale will be done as described in Appendix J of the RMP (May, 1995).

¹ Oregon Natural Resources Council v. United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, Civil No. 98-0942WD

IV. DECISION RATIONALE

Considering public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management recommendations contained in the Thomas Creek Watershed Analysis, and the management direction contained in the RMP, I have decided to implement the selected action as described above. My rationale for this decision follows:

The selected action addresses the identified purpose and need for action in that it will meet the need for forest products and forest habitat as described in the *Salem District Resource Management Plan* (RMP, 1995, pp. 1 and 2). The proposal would also provide for retention of important ecological components within the forest management area. (EA pp. 1). Also, the selected action provides social and economic benefits to local communities through the supply of approximately 5,713 hundred cubic feet of merchantable timber to local mills and some contract work. In addition, the Density Management treatment would provide for the retention of important ecological components within the forest management area.

The “no action” alternative was not selected because it does not address the purpose and need for action.

V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/ CONSULTATION/COORDINATION

1. Scoping

A description of the proposal was included in the Salem Bureau of Land Management *Project Update* which is mailed to more than 900 individuals and organizations four times each year. A letter asking for scoping input on the proposal was mailed on February 17, 1999 to eleven adjacent landowners, individuals and organizations who have expressed an interest in management activities in the resource area as a whole or in this drainage. Letters were also sent to the City of Salem, Marion County Board of Commissioners, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Willamette National Forest, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde.

2. Comment Period

The EA was made available for public review for forty-two days commencing August 20, 1999. Copies of the EA were sent to the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, U. S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Forestry, the Marion County Board of Commissioners, the City of Salem, two adjacent land owners, six interest groups,

and three individuals.

3. Comments

Written comments were received from three individuals, eight organizations the City of Salem and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All comments were considered for modification of the proposed action or performing additional analysis. Copies of the comments are available in the Fawn Creek EA file in the Salem District office.

4. Consultation/Coordination

The Fawn Creek timber sale was submitted for Formal Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on August 12, 1998. Consultation was concluded on September 29, 1998 (Service Log #98-F-381). As a result of consultation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that the sale would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl.

At the time of completion of the Environmental Assessment for the Fawn Creek timber sale in August, 1999, Upper Willamette River (UWR) steelhead and UWR chinook salmon had recently been listed as threatened species by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the Endangered Species Act (UWR Steelhead were listed on March 25, 1999, and UWR chinook salmon were listed on March 24, 1999). The Fawn Creek timber sale was determined to be 'may affect, not likely to adversely affect' UWR steelhead and UWR chinook salmon. Concurrence by the NMFS with that determination was received by Salem District BLM in a letter dated August 6, 1999.

VI. CONCLUSION

I have determined that change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Fawn Creek timber sale is not necessary for these reasons:

The existing EA for the Fawn Creek timber sale, along with additional information contained in this document, fully covers the project as modified by the proposed mitigation and adjustments required by the surveys conducted for Survey and Manage species, and Section 7 consultation. The action as amended is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the original EA, and the environmental impacts are within those described in the original EA and are less than or the same as those anticipated for the proposed action in that assessment.

There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the modification to the proposed action or its impacts which were not addressed in the EA. The EA anticipated protecting Survey and Manage species in accordance with the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan and the Salem District.

The surveys conducted for this sale complete the survey requirements for this sale as amended by the *Plan Maintenance Documentation: Decision to Delay the Effective Date for Surveying 7 "Survey and Manage" and Protection Buffer Species*, which was approved March 13, 2000, and fulfills the Survey and Manage S&G commitment identified in the EA.

Protests

In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Sale is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". Protests of this sale must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the Notice of Sale will be published in the Stayton Mail on or around August 3, 2001. The planned sale date is August 29, 2001.

Contact Person

Approved by: Richard C. Prather 23 JUL 2001
Richard C. Prather Date
Cascades Area Manager

For additional information concerning this decision or the BLM protest process, contact Randy Herrin (503) 315-5924 or Bob Hershey (503)315-5931, BLM Salem District Office, 1717 Fabry SE , Salem, Oregon 97306.

APPENDIX A: Project Design Features for the Selected Action

Table 3: Project Design Features for the Selected Action	
Management Activity	Unit 1 (EA Units B, D, E, and F)
Harvest Method	Density Management (Connectivity)
Unit Acres	
Harvest Acres	58
Volume	
Cruised Volume (ccf - hundred cubic feet)	5713
Cruised Volume (mbf - thousand board feet)	3913
Logging Systems Acres	
Cable (One end or Partial Suspension)	9
Ground Based	49
Roads	
Construction	150 feet
Renovation	4.3 miles
Decommissioning	0
Site Preparation	
Burning of Concentrations (Acres)	58
Slashing (Acres)	10
Hand Fire Trails (feet)	12,500

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Timber Sale Contact Map Contract No. OR080-TS1-503

T. 8 S., R. 3 E., Section 25, W. M. - SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON



Scale: 1" = 1,000'

Partial cut area	58 acres
Green tree retention area (reserve)	9 acres
Reserve area	173 acres
Total contract area	240 acres

LEGEND

Existing road

Corner found

Stream

Partial cutting area

Approximate location in which trees are marked for cutting in the reserve area with red paint.

Cable yarding area

Green tree retention area-reserve

Contract boundary

Reserve area

Approximate location of genetically superior trees marked with orange and green paint - reserved

Boundary of the partial cut area painted orange and posted.

Boundaries of the green tree retention areas are painted green and posted.