

Final Decision Documentation
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for
Plentywater Creek Project Forest Management actions:
Commercial Thinning; Regeneration Harvest;
Riparian Reserve Density Management

Environmental Assessment Number OR-086-01-01

INTRODUCTION

The BLM (Bureau of Land Management) has conducted an environmental analysis (Environmental Assessment Number OR-086-01-01) for Commercial Thinning and Regeneration Harvest projects on a total of approximately 544 acres of Matrix and Density Management on approximately 37 acres of RR (Riparian Reserves) land use allocations comprised of young densely stocked conifer stands dominated by Douglas-fir aged 40 – 60 years. In addition to the forest management activities, the project includes the following watershed restoration projects; 1/ Wildlife Habitat enhancement on approximately 80 acres of Matrix and RR; 2/ Fish Habitat Enhancement on approximately 2000 feet of stream; 3/ Campground Restoration to restore natural flood plain function by decompacting and planting an abandoned campground; and 4/ Stabilize a road that was damaged in the 1996 floods if alternate access can be acquired, or repair it if alternate access cannot be acquired. **This final decision documentation and Finding of No Significant Impact authorizes the implementation of the Forest Management projects only**¹. The project area is located approximately 12 miles north of Hillsboro and Forest Grove, Oregon, in Washington and Multnomah Counties on forested lands managed by the Tillamook Field Office, Salem District, BLM (See Figure 1). The project area lies within the Dairy-McKay Creek and Rock Creek watersheds, both tributaries to the Tualatin River. The projects will take place in Township 2 North, Range 2 West, sections 7, 15, 17, 21; Township 2 North, Range 3 West, sections 3, 6; and Township 3 North, Range 3 West, sections 21, 27, 29, and 33.

On April 30, 2002, subsequent to the release of the EA, the NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) withdrew critical habitat designations for 19 salmon and steelhead populations on the West Coast. These populations include those residing in the Plentywater Creek project area. The EA contains discussion regarding Critical Habitat for these species which is now moot. However, the ESA (Endangered Species Act) effects calls for the impacts of the projects on the listed fish species living within the Dairy-McKay Watershed is still valid and is in no way modified by the

¹ Environmental Assessment Number OR-086-01-01, dated November 27, 2001, contains environmental analysis conducted for two groups of projects, Forest Management and Watershed Restoration. A separate decision and FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) is expected to be issued for the watershed restoration projects in September, 2002.

withdrawal of the Critical Habitat designation.

A copy of the EA can be obtained from the Tillamook Field Office, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141. Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, closed on holidays, or by visiting our Internet site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/salem/html/planning/index.htm>.

The decision to be made by the Tillamook Field Manager is whether or not to prepare an environmental impact statement, and whether to approve the density management project as proposed, not at all, or to some other extent.

DECISION

Based on site-specific analysis, the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the WA (Diary-McKay Creek), dated March 1999; the ROD/RMP (*Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*), dated May 1995; the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, dated April 1994; and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*, dated January 2001, I have decided to implement the forest management actions described in Alternative 2, as two separate timber sale actions (see Figure 2), hereafter referred to as the “Selected Alternative”, with 4 clarifications² and 3 modifications³. The clarifications and modifications are minor and do not change the scope of the project analyzed in EA number OR-086-01-01, nor do these clarifications and modifications affect the adequacy of the analysis contained in the EA.

Clarifications:

1. A typographical error was found on page 37 of the EA where it states that 5000 feet of road construction is equal to 22 acres of impacted soil. This is a typographical error and is not correct. The correct acreage impacted is 2.2 acres. During the analysis phase of the project, the 2.2 acre figure was used in all calculations.
2. On page 64 in the Fish Resource Analysis unit 10-1 is referenced. Unit 10-1 should have been identified as unit 9-1. The error is a result of a unit numbering error on a preliminary map used during project planning.
3. The S&M (Survey and Manage) species located within or near timber harvest units will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection measures specified in the

² Clarifications correct typographical errors and clarify the intent of S&M (Survey and Manage) buffer implementation plans.

³ The modification reflects a modification to the project which resulted from the incorporation of Public Comments received during Public review of Environmental Assessment number OR-086-01-01.

January 2001 Survey and Manage ROD. Where a buffer is specified, a buffer that is sufficient to maintain the Micro site conditions required for each species will be implemented. These buffers will be implemented by BLM personnel during the unit layout phase of the project and will be specific to the conditions found at each S&M site.

4. On page 13 of the EA, the third design feature listed under the heading “Common to all units”, incorrectly identifies that “ground based equipment would not be allowed within RR except where they are able to operate from existing *permanent* roads located within the RR.” This should have stated all *existing roads and compacted skid trails* located within RR. This was correctly identified on page 37 of the EA, in the Soils impacts analysis.

Modifications:

1. Following my review of the Public Comments received for EA number OR-086-01-01, I decided to revisit my preliminary decision on unit 9-1 and unit 21-3. In this review I re-examined the structural diversity across the landscape and the habitat elements offered by these two units. Based on my review I have decided that the habitat values provided on the landscape by the habitat structure of units 9-1 and 21-3 are more important than the timber value at this time. Therefore, I have decided to defer treatment of these units for an indefinite period of time. Public comments to the EA are contained in Addendum 1.
2. The fish impact analysis indicates that timber harvest units 3-1a, 27-1, 21-2 and 15-1 totaling approximately 100 acres of Matrix commercial thinning, 97 acres of Matrix regeneration harvest, and 21 acres of Riparian Reserve density management, result in an ESA call of “**No Effect**” for listed fish. These timber harvest units will be grouped and offered as a timber sale called “Plentywater” and will not require project specific ESA consultation. Therefore, the “Plentywater” timber sale can proceed to be offered for sale in Fiscal Year 2003.

The “Plentywater” TS will be implemented so that all of the project design features specified in Chapter 2 of the EA are implemented, along with two of the additional mitigation measures specified in EA Chapter 3.8 and an additional feature, specifically:

- a. Include Chapter 3.8.1 Measure 1 for units 3-1a, 21-2 and 15-1. Specifically, place boulders, logs, logging slash, or berms of soil to discourage OHV (Off-Highway Vehicle) activity. Current OHV designations contained within the Salem District RMP will remain in effect.
- b. Include Chapter 3.8.1 Measure 4 for Unit 21-2 which is to “Place a short windrow or low berm of soil/ unmerchantable logs/ slash across a small swale

along the southern property boundary of Unit 21-2. Restrict ground-based equipment from 75 feet of the small swale along the southern boundary.” This measure is expected to alleviate some concerns raised by adjacent land owners, within the Rural Interface Area, during the scoping process.

- c. This project will be implemented using dry season operations only. Road maintenance activities such as spot rocking and sediment traps/filters in ditch lines will be used to the greatest extent practicable.
3. The fish impact analysis indicates that timber harvest units 3-1b, 3-2, 3-3, 21-1, 29-1, 33-1, 7-1, 17-1 totaling approximately 150 acres of Matrix commercial thinning, 119 acres of Matrix regeneration harvest and 16 acres of Riparian Reserve density management result in an ESA call of “**May Affect, Not likely to Adversely Affect**” and “**May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect**” for listed fish species. These timber harvest units will be grouped and offered as a timber sale called “Plenty Agua” and will require project specific ESA consultation. The “Plenty Agua” timber sale will be offered following completion of ESA consultation, which will likely be in Fiscal Year 2005.

When it is implemented, the “Plenty Agua” TS will be implemented consistent with ESA consultation and so that all of the project design features specified in Chapter 2 of the EA are implemented, along with two of the additional mitigation measures specified in EA Chapter 3.8 and two additional features, specifically:

- a. Include Measure 1 for units 3-1b, 3-3 and 21-1. Specifically, place boulders, logs, logging slash, or berms of soil to discourage OHV activity. Current OHV designations contained within the Salem District RMP will remain in effect.
- b. Include Measure 3 for Unit 17-1, “Any additional fill material in ditch along the 2N-2-18 road as a result of forest practices should be removed prior to fall rains when water can collect in the ditch.” This is intended to reduce potential sediment transport in the ditch line along BLM road 2N-2-18.
- c. In addition, if BLM is unable to acquire alternate access to Unit 33-1, BLM road 3N-3-33 will be repaired as a portion of the timber sale action.
- d. Dry season hauling will be employed in the harvest of unit 17-1 and 21-1. Dry season hauling will be implemented in the remaining “Plenty Agua” TS harvest units to the greatest extent possible.

Design features for the Selected Alternative are specified below and can be found, except where above specified modifications occur, on pages 12 - 19 of the Plentywater Creek Project EA.

The Selected Alternative will implement the appropriate BMPs (Best Management Practices), which are listed below, and are contained in Appendix C1 through C11 of the RMP as amended. Additional project specific design features follow the RMP BMPs.

Timber harvest BMPs for cable yarding areas are:

1. On areas with high water tables, yard with full suspension or with one-end suspension on seasonally dry soils. On areas with slopes exceeding 65 percent, yard with full suspension, one-end suspension using seasonal restrictions, or one-end suspension using a standing skyline with lateral yarding capacity. Yard remaining areas using one-end suspension.
2. Pile yarding debris on the landing to minimize the acreage around the landing impacted by intense burns or obstructed by heavy slash concentrations.
3. Hand water bar cable yarding corridors immediately after use on sensitive soils where gouging occurs.
4. When absolutely necessary to yard through riparian areas, restrict yarding in riparian areas to corridors that are perpendicular to streams. Management guidelines for corridors are:
 - a. Restrict corridors to the minimum number feasible.
 - b. Corridors will not exceed 50 feet in width nor reduce crown cover on a project stream segment to less than 75 percent of predisturbance conditions.
 - c. Logs will be fully suspended over water and adjacent banks.

Timber harvest BMPs for ground based yarding areas are:

1. Use existing skid roads wherever possible.
2. Limit new skid roads to slopes less than 35 percent.
3. Use designated skid roads to limit areal extent of skid roads plus landings to less than 10 percent of the unit.
4. Restrict tractor operations to designated roads and limit operations to periods of low soil moisture, when soils have the most resistance to compaction (dry season).
5. In partial cut areas, locate skid roads where they can be used for regeneration harvest.
6. Till compacted roads, including skid roads from previous entries, with a properly designed self-drafting winged subsoiler.
7. Avoid tractor yarding on areas where soil damage cannot be mitigated.
8. Avoid placement of skid roads through areas of high water tables or where the skid roads will channel water into unstable headwall areas.
9. Water bar skid roads whenever surface erosion is likely.
10. Avoid use of wide track vehicles or more than one machine on a skid road at any given time to minimize the width of the skid roads. On multiple pass skid roads, wide track vehicles create in wider skid roads, and after multiple passes, drive the compaction deeper than a regular width track. However, they are good for one pass operations such as incidental scattered salvage or site preparation.

11. If timber harvesting activities will produce slash that covers the existing skid roads so they cannot be relocated, till prior to felling timber with a properly designed winged subsoiler.

The decision is to implement two timber sales, described below, using combinations of commercial thinning and regeneration harvest prescriptions. Appendix 1 “Silvicultural Prescription,” contains specific information about the proposed stand treatments and site preparation including the use of fire.

The units and logging systems described within the Selected Alternative are depicted on Figure 2 – “Map of Units and Logging Systems for Alternative 2.” Regeneration harvest prescriptions will be applied where there is a high incidence of PW (*Phellinus weirii*), hardwoods, or low density stocking of conifer species. Commercial thinning will be applied where conifer growth and/or wildlife habitat value can be enhanced by the treatment. The regeneration areas will be reforested using an appropriate mix of native conifer species and/or hardwoods for the site. The projects are expected to be implemented (sold) during FY 2003 through 2005 and result in the production of an estimated **8 MMBF** (million board feet) of commercial timber products (see Table 1).

Specific design features, in addition to those specified in the BMPs listed in the EA under section 2.3, of the project will help meet the management objectives contained within the RMP and are in compliance with the standards and guidelines contained within the Northwest Forest Plan. These design features are as follows:

Common to all units:

1. Following harvest, all skid trails within the regeneration harvest units which are determined by the hydrologist to be affecting the hydrologic function of the watershed will be decommissioned by decompacting the trail surface (subsoiling) and if needed, water-barring and blocking to vehicular traffic.
2. Within the thinning units skid trails will not be subsoiled to avoid damaging the roots of reserve trees however if necessary, they may be blocked and/or water-barred.
3. Ground based equipment will not be allowed within RR except where they are able to operate from existing permanent roads located within the RR.
4. Depending on the individual site specific fuels prescription, property boundaries, RR, sensitive sites containing Special Status or Survey and Manage vascular plant, fungi or mollusks, and green retention tree clumps greater than 1 acre in size will be fire trailed for maximum protection from ground fire.

Unit 27-1

1. Where cable corridors pass through the RR area, corridor width will be limited to 12 feet.
2. Where it is necessary to yard across Plentywater Creek and through the RR, full suspension will be required over Plentywater Creek and the adjacent 50 foot “no cut” buffers on each side of Plentywater Creek.
3. The trees which will be cut for cable corridor construction within the 50 foot “no cut” buffers will be felled into Plentywater Creek (if possible) to supplement LWD (Large

Woody Debris). If they cannot be felled directly into Plentywater Creek, they will be maintained on-site as CWD (Coarse Woody Debris).

Unit 21-2 and 15-1 (Rural Interface areas)

1. A visual buffer 50 - 75 feet in width will be retained where Solberger Road passes through Unit 21-2.
2. Scotch broom will be cut and/or pulled one year prior to commencement of harvest activity. Following completion of harvest for a period of three to five years reduce seed production and spread by cutting and/or hand pulling all mature plants having the ability to reproduce.
3. Infestations of English Ivy will be treated to eliminate or reduce their presence. Treatment will consist of cutting and/or hand pulling ground cover for a minimum of one year prior to commencement of harvest activity. Following completion of harvest for a period of three to five years reduce seed production and spread by cutting and/or hand pulling all mature plants having the ability to reproduce.
4. The use of compression brakes will be prohibited.
5. The tall bugbane (*Cimicifuga elata*) site will be protected with a 50 foot buffer.

Unit 17-1

1. Areas gouged on erosion prone steep slopes will be hand water barred.
2. The unstable area in the northwest corner of the unit will not be logged.
3. Waddles will be placed in the swale above the ditch adjacent to BLM road 2N-2-18.
4. The spur road intersecting BLM road 2N-2-18 will be used and decommissioned in one season. Spur decommissioning will include slope recontouring of the road segment located within the RR.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Table 1. Harvest Unit Information. This table summarizes the harvest unit information for the Selected Alternative. Stand information and harvest volumes are estimates based on preliminary unit examination.				
HARVEST UNIT(s)	ACRES (Approx.)	LOGGING METHOD	ESTIMATED HARVEST VOLUME (board feet)	Treatment Prescription Type
3-1, 3-2, 21-1, 27-1, 21-2, 15-1, 33-1	195	Ground Based	3,289	Regeneration
3-3, 21-1, 27-1, 17-1, 15-1	110	Ground Based	1,270	Commercial Thinning
3-1, 27-1	16	Cable	225	Regeneration
21-1, 27-1, 29-1, 7-1,	193	Cable	2,670	Commercial Thinning
Totals	514		8 MMBF*	

*Rounded to nearest million

Road Management:

The Selected Alternative will involve approximately 9,700 feet of **road construction** of which approximately 5,000 feet will be rocked and considered to be **permanent**; the remainder will be considered **semi-permanent**. The project also involves the **reconstruction** of an additional 3,500 feet of existing natural surface road; and decommissioning of approximately 15,400 feet of semi-permanent and existing permanent roads (see Table 2) and the removal of one culvert. In addition the project will result in the designation/construction of approximately 108,900 feet of skid trails. Approximately 70,940 feet of skid trail along with all landings will be sub-soiled in the regeneration harvest areas.

Table 2. Road Summary - Selected Alternative. Approximate amount (linear feet) of new road construction, reconstruction of existing roads and road decommissioning which will result from implementing Alternative 2 - Selected Alternative.

Proposed Action	Reconst.	Maint.	*New Temp (**semi-perm)	*New Perm.	Mitigation Measures	*Decommission	*Net
T2N R2W, Section 21	0	800	300	0	Subsoil, waterbar, block and plant road.	1100	-800
T2N R2W sec. 17	500	2000	0	0	Subsoil, waterbar and block road	500	-500
T2N R2W sec. 15	0	0	1400	0	Subsoil, waterbar, block and plant road	2800	-1400
T2N R2W sec. 7	0	2000	0	3000		0	+3000
T3N R3W sec. 29	0	6000	0	0	Subsoil, waterbar, block and plant road	500	-500
T3N R3W sec. 21	0	7000	2000	0	Subsoil, waterbar, block and plant road	2000	0
T3N R3W sec. 27	0	2000	0	2000		0	+2000
T3N R3W sec. 33***	0	7500	0	0		0	0
T2N R3W sec. 3 & 9	3000	6500	1000	0	Subsoil, waterbar, block and plant road	8500	-7500
TOTAL	3,500	33,800	4,700	5,000		15,400	-5,700

* New Temp. + New Perm. - Decommission = Net.

** Semi-permanent roads that may be used for longer than one dry season but are decommissioned by the end on the contract.

*** This value may vary pending on resolution of access as previously specified.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Considering public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management recommendations contained in the WA and the management direction contained in the ROD/RMP and Survey and Manage ROD, I have decided to implement the selected alternative as described above. My rationale for this decision follows:

Background:

Following completion of project scoping the IDT analyzed the comments received and developed project alternatives. There is a statutory requirement for the “No Action” alternative, Alternative 1, which was developed and utilized as a baseline for comparison of the effects of the action alternatives. Three action alternatives were developed that would partially or fully meet the purpose and need for action.

When developing the proposed action the IDT was sensitive to the requests of the people living in the Rural Interface area, and so, incorporated all feasible requests they made as design features for Alternative 2 (proposed action) of the EA. These design features included elements such as a visual buffer along Solberger road, treatment of scotch broom along the County road right of way (Solberger Road), and restrictions on the use of compression brakes on log trucks to reduce noise generation. Sub-soiling, planting, and blocking new temporary roads and blocking and water barring existing roads to prevent unauthorized vehicular access were requested by comments, but would have been design features even if they had not. The visual buffer had been discussed by the IDT prior to public comment, but the comments BLM received that requested it solidified it as a project design feature. Additionally, one of our neighbors perceived the potential for flooding on their property resulting from BLM management. BLM’s hydrologist visited the area and determined that there was no potential. However, to address this perceived problem, the BLM has incorporated a berm along the property line by this decision. This additional design feature was requested by one of our neighbors and is intended to resolve the perceived potential for over land water flow from BLM onto adjacent rural residential lands.

It was not possible to address two of the issues raised by the public in the Rural Interface through design features. Those issues are: 1/ The perception that forest management on BLM lands would cause an increase in criminal activity in the area and 2/ dust generation and road damage due to harvest related traffic on Solberger Road. The BLM does not believe that BLM management is responsible for criminal activity in the Rural Interface Area, rather that this is a symptom of increased urbanization in Washington County and is the domain of the Washington County Sheriffs Department. The BLM cannot conduct dust abatement or road maintenance on Solberger Road, a County road, due to a Comptroller General ruling prohibiting the expenditure of appropriated funds on County facilities (Project Record document 67). Washington County Road department is responsible for maintaining and repairing County roads.

Alternative 3, the soil and water alternative, was developed to eliminate ground based yarding and reduce new road construction, to address the issue of soil compaction and water quality.

Alternative 4 was developed to resolve the two issues not resolved by design features of the proposed action, perceived criminal activity increase and County road dust and damage.

The BLM found that the only way to resolve these issues was to not conduct forest management in the Rural Interface Area. Therefore, Alternative 4 was developed with two possible options. Those options were 4/2 and 4/3. Alternative 4/2 consisted of all actions specified in Alternative 2 of the EA, but did not treat the Rural Interface area. Alternative 4/3 consisted of all actions specified in Alternative 3 of the EA, but did not treat the Rural Interface area. This dual option alternative, as well as the other three alternatives were fully analyzed in the EA.

Decision Rationale:

1. The Selected Alternative, as described above, fully addresses the purpose and need for action and fulfills the project objectives, as stated on pages 2 thru 6 of the EA.
2. The Selected Alternative best meets Matrix land use objectives, resolves those issues which are under the control of the BLM, meets all ACS (Aquatic Conservation Strategy) objectives and results in a net decrease in road mileage in the watershed. (RMP p. 20, EA Chapter 2 and 3, Appendix 9).
3. Alternative 1 was not selected because it does not meet Matrix objectives and does not meet the purpose and need for action.
4. Alternative 3 was not selected because it would result in reducing the treatment area by approximately 100 acres. This would prevent these matrix lands from meeting Matrix objectives. I found that this reduction in treatment area was not necessary to address the soil and water issue, because the soil and water analysis contained in the EA indicated that the impacts associated with the Selected Alternative, as described, are well within the acceptable impacts disclosed in the RMP/EIS. In addition, there would be no negative cumulative effects resulting from implementing the Selected Alternative as described (EA Chapter 3).
5. Alternative 4/2 and 4/3 were not selected because all of the issues raised by the public, with the exception of two issues which are beyond the control of BLM, were resolved through project design features in the Selected Alternative (EA Chapter 2).
6. The Selected Alternative is not the most environmentally friendly alternative (Alternative 3), nor is it the most socially acceptable alternative to those living in the Rural Interface area (Alternative 4). However, the Selected Alternative is the best balance between the environment and society at large.
7. The impacts associated with the Selected Alternative are fully acceptable and are not outside the impacts disclosed in the Salem District RMP/EIS.

8. The Selected Alternative is consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and programs (EA Chapter 3.7, pp. 74-80).
9. The Selected Alternative has design features to minimize negative impacts and benefit the overall condition in the watershed. Newly compacted areas as well as residual compaction and roads from past management actions will be subsoiled upon completion of the project (EA pp. 17-18, 27, 37). The result of subsoiling these areas will be a net decrease of compacted area in the watershed, maintenance of existing conditions, movement toward proper functioning condition, and attainment of ACS Objectives (EA pp. 17-18, 27, 37; Appendix 8, 9).
10. The six S&M species located within or near timber harvest units will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection measures specified in the January 2001 Survey and Manage ROD. Where a buffer is specified, a buffer that is consistent with the guidance and is sufficient to maintain the Micro-site conditions required for each species will be implemented. These buffers will be implemented by BLM personnel during the unit layout phase of the project and will be specific to the conditions found at each S&M site.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping consisted of listing the proposed project in the June, September, and December 2000 and March 2001 editions of the quarterly *Salem District Project Update* which was mailed to over 1,000 addresses, and a letter and scoping report (Project Record document 51) was mailed on July 26, 2000 to 124 potentially affected and/or interested individuals, groups, and agencies (Project Record document 51). A total of 10 letters were received as a result of this scoping effort. All public input was assigned a number and filed within the Project Record (Project Record documents 39, 52-55, 58, 62-65). The IDT reviewed, clarified, and addressed the public comments. The disposition of those comments are contained in Appendix 2 of the EA. Subsequent to the previously described scoping period, a public meeting was held on January 29, 2001 which provided an open exchange of information between meeting participants and the BLM.

Comments received during that meeting were reviewed by the IDT to determine whether any additional issues were identified. Those comments and BLM's responses were placed in the project record and distributed by mail to the meeting participants.

On February 12, 2002, a preliminary FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) and decision, along with a copy of the EA (Environmental Assessment Number OR-086-01-01) was mailed to 22 interested individuals, groups and agencies that requested to be placed on the mailing list (Project Record documents 148, 149, 151). Additionally, legal notices for public comment appeared in the Headlight Herald on February 13, 2002 and the Hillsboro Argus on February 14,

2002 (Project Record documents 147 and 150) respectively of Tillamook and Hillsboro, Oregon.

One copy of the EA and Preliminary FONSI was sent out in response to a telephone request made by a private citizen on February 19, 2002 (Project Record document 145).

As a result of the notice for public comment, 7 letters were received and were considered by the Tillamook Field Manager in reaching an informed decision (Project Record documents 146, 152, 153, 158, 159, 160, 162). The Bureau's response to the public comments received for the completed EA and Preliminary FONSI are contained in Addendum 1. A copy of Addendum 1 is attached. Additional copies can be obtained from the Tillamook Field Office, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141. Office Hours are Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, closed on holidays, or by visiting our Internet site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/salem/html/planning/index.htm>.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR “PLENTYWATER” AND “PLENTY AGUA” TIMBER SALES

The Selected Alternative, as previously described, is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed. This finding is based on the following discussion:

Context. The Selected Alternative is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 581 acres of BLM administered forest land (including road maintenance, construction and decommissioning) that by itself does not have international, national, region-wide, or state-wide importance. The discussion of the significance criteria that follows applies to the intended action and is within the context of local importance. Chapter 3 of the EA and the associated appendices detail the effects of the Selected Alternative. None of the effects identified, including direct, indirect and cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effects described in the RMP/FEIS.

Intensity. The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** Due to the Selected Alternative's design features, the predicted effects, most noteworthy, include: 1/ Regeneration harvest will

retain 6-8 of the largest trees available and 240 lineal feet of down wood on site; 2/ Commercial thinning will increase residual stand growth and enhance timber production of the watershed; 3/ thinning 37 acres of RR will help enhance of the overall level of diversity in the area; 4/improve social and economic benefits to the local communities through the supply of approximately eight million board feet of timber to local mills and some contract work associated with road decommissioning; 6/ restoration and maintenance of the ACS (Aquatic Conservation Strategy) objectives; 7/ soil disturbance and compaction, and loss in soil productivity of about 12 acres over the total treatment area; and 8/ no loss in population viability of special status or special attention species (also see significance criteria #9 below).

None of the environmental effects disclosed above and discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the RMP/FEIS.

2. **The degree to which the Selected Alternative will affect public health or safety.** Public health and safety were not identified as an issue. The Selected Alternative is comparable to other forest management projects that have occurred within the Salem District with no unusual health or safety concerns.

Some public comments did indicate the perception that forest management activity would cause an increase in criminal activity within the Rural Interface area. Partly in response to these comments the BLM incorporated features such as a visual buffer along Solberger Road and obliteration and blocking of temporary roads, and blocking of existing BLM roads in the Rural Interface area. The BLM identified in the EA (Chapter 3; Appendix 2) that increased urbanization of Washington County, a historically rural county, may lead to increased criminal activity in the area rather than forest management. The EA continues that BLM Law Enforcement patrols as well as Washington County Sheriffs Deputy patrols would continue at a level appropriate for the area.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There are no historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wild and scenic rivers, or wildernesses located within the project area (EA, Appendix 3).

The project area is located within the Matrix and RR land use allocations, as identified in the RMP. Activities associated with the Selected Alternative are predicted to accelerate the development of some late-successional forest structural features in Riparian Reserves, and will contribute to the attainment of ACS objectives.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** Extensive scoping of the Selected Alternative resulted in 10 comment letters. The disposition of those comments is contained in Appendix 2 of the

EA. The Environmental Assessment was released for public comment on February 14, 2002 through March 18, 2002. A total of 7 comment letters were received. Those comments and BLM responses can be found in Addendum 1.

The effects of the Selected Alternative on the quality of the human environment were adequately understood by the interdisciplinary team to provide an environmental analysis. A complete disclosure of the predicted effects of the Selected Alternative is contained in Chapter 3 of the EA and associated appendices. There are no predicted effects on the quality of the human environment that are considered to be highly controversial.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The Proposed Action is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas and have found effects to be reasonably predictable. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The Selected Alternative does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. The Selected Alternative treats approximately 544 acres of Matrix and Density Management on approximately 37 acres of RR land use allocations comprised of young densely stocked conifer stands dominated by Douglas-fir aged 40 – 60 years (including associated road management). Any additional future projects will be evaluated through the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and will stand on their own as to their environmental effects.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the Selected Alternative in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the Selected Alternative is contained in Chapter 3 of the EA and the associated appendices.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The Selected Alternative will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will the Selected Alternative cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, Appendix 3).
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered**

Species Act of 1973. Regarding ESA Section 7 consultation with NMFS; 1/ “Plentywater” TS received a “*No Effect*” call for the upper Willamette steelhead, therefore no consultation is required; 2/ “Plenty Agua” TS received findings of “*May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect,*” and “*May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect*” the upper Willamette steelhead (Chapter 3). “Plenty Agua” will require ESA consultation with NMFS and will not be implemented until such time that the appropriate consultation has been completed.

Section 7 consultation with USFWS (United States Fish and Wildlife Service) regarding potential impacts upon the northern spotted owl, bald eagle and marbled murrelet will be completed prior to project implementation. See Appendix 10 of the EA for the details of the ESA effect findings for the spotted owl, bald eagle and marbled murrelet.

It is expected that the design features of the “Plentywater” timber sale will be consistent with USFWS’ 2003 BO (Biological Opinion) so as to allow programmatic consultation. In the event that “Plentywater” is not consistent with the requirements of the BO, project specific consultation will be initiated. Regarding “Plenty Agua” TS, if it is determined to be inconsistent with the applicable programmatic BO, project specific consultation will be initiated. No action will be implemented in either timber treatment project until the appropriate consultation has been completed.

When implemented, the design features of the Selected Alternative will be consistent with the Terms and Conditions of the applicable BOs.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The Selected Alternative does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The EA and supporting Project Record contain discussions pertaining to the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) and Executive Order 13212 (Presidents National Energy Policy). State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Furthermore, the Selected Alternative is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

PROTEST PROVISIONS

PROTEST PROVISIONS

In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for the "Plentywater" and the "Plenty Agua" timber sale projects 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." For the "Plentywater" project, the Notice of Sale is anticipated to be published the first week of November 2002 in the *Hillsboro Argus* and *Headlight Herald*, newspapers respectively of Hillsboro and Tillamook, Oregon. The "Plenty Agua" timber sale advertisement will be published following completion of ESA consultation with NMFS.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

If no protest is received within 15 days after publication of the Notice of Sale, this decision will become final and may be implemented immediately. If a timely protest is received, this decision will be reconsidered in light of the statements of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available and a final decision will be issued in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3.

CONTACT PERSON

For additional information concerning this decision or the BLM appeal process contact David Roché, Tillamook Field Office, 4610 Third Street, Tillamook, Oregon 97141; Telephone (503) 815-1100.

Approved by: 
Dana R. Shuford
Tillamook Field Manager

7/26/02
Date