



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459

Home page: www.blm.gov/or E-mail: OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov

Telephone: (541) 756-0100 Toll Free: (888) 809-0839 Fax: (541) 751-4303



1792/5400 (OR-120)
Middle Creek CTs II
EA OR125-04-17
Mast Creek CT
OR120-TS08-04

Nov 19, 2007

Dear Citizen:

Enclosed is copy of the Decision Documentation and maps for the "Mast Creek CT" (OR120-TS08-04) timber sale. This sale was analyzed as part of the "Middle Creek CTs II" Environmental Assessment (EA OR 125-04-17). The analysis concluded in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for proposed density management/commercial thinning and red alder conversion harvest projects. These projects were designed to implement management objectives described in the BLM Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan and Northwest Forest Plan.

Sincerely,

Paul Fontaine (Acting)

Paul T. Flanagan
Acting Umpqua Field Manager

2 Attachments:

Decision Documentation (4pp)
Exhibit A and A-1 sale map (5pp)



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5400/1792 (OR120)
Mast Creek CT
OR120-TS08-04
Middle Creek CTs II EA
OR125-04-17

Decision Documentation

Mast Creek CT Timber Sale Analyzed in Environmental Assessment OR125-04-17, Middle Creek CTs II

Background:

The Mast Creek CT timber sale is offered as partial replacement volume for the Broken Buck timber sale.

The Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, using input from District resource staff and public input, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Middle Creek CTs II EA. There is a No-Action Alternative and a Proposed Action Alternative. The Proposed Action Alternative proposes to thin approximately 1985 acres of conifer and to convert approximately 264 acres of red alder to conifer in 35-65 year old stands within the Middle Creek subwatershed in Coos County. The Mast Creek CT timber sale is part of the Middle Creek CTs II project located in T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sections 16, 17, 20, and 21, Willamette Meridian. The proposed treatment area is located in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) and Riparian Reserve (RR) land use allocation.

The following EA estimates have been field verified for the Mast Creek CT timber sale:

	Thinning Acres	Alder Conversion Acres	New Road Construction Miles	Road Renovation & Improvement Miles	Road Decommission Miles
EA Estimate	351	4	0.7	5.8	0.7
Field Verified	372	3	0.6	5.5	1.9

Harvest

- The harvest area includes two thinning units with 225 acres in the GFMA and 147 acres

in the riparian reserve, and one alder conversion with 3 acres in the GFMA.

- Variable width stream buffer are reserved from cutting within the RR, except as needed for skyline yarding corridors. Corridor trees cut in the buffer are to be left on site.
- The sale area will be harvested with a skyline cable system.
- One and nine-tenths miles of road decommissioning consists of barricading, scarifying, water-barring, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching 13 rock surface and natural surface spur roads as necessary to stabilize road surfaces.
- Approximately 5146 MBF of timber is scheduled for removal. This includes approximately 3200 MBF from the GFMA which contributes to the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ), with the remaining 1946 MBF coming from the RR.

The ***Final - Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement and its Record of Decision*** (USDI 1995) responds to two needs: the need for forest habitat and the need for forest products (USDI 1995 p1). These needs are addressed in the RMP through an ecosystem management strategy under which BLM lands “will be managed to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems from which a sustainable production of natural resources can be provided” (USDI 1995, p. 5).

The following purposes for the project are incorporated in the design features (Special Provisions) of the Mast Creek CT timber sale.

1. Improve GFMA stand structure by thinning out excess trees in overstocked stands to enhance the growth and vigor of the residual trees to provide larger and healthier trees for future management objectives while maintaining native species diversity. “*Apply silvicultural systems that are planned to produce, over time, forests with desired species composition, structural characteristics, and distribution of seral or age classes*” (RMP, p.53).
2. Improve Riparian Reserve stand structure by thinning out excess trees in overstocked stands to enhance the growth and vigor of the residual trees to provide larger and healthier trees for future management objectives while maintaining native species diversity.
3. Restore and maintain within the Riparian Reserve the structural habitat complexity typically found in late-successional or old-growth forests, such as large green trees, large down logs, and snags.
4. Work towards the goals in the *Western Oregon Districts Transportation Management Plan* by renovating or improving problem roads and decommissioning roads not needed for continued resource management.
5. Provide cost effective management that will enable implementation of these management objectives while providing collateral economic benefits to society.
6. Provide timber sale volume toward the Coos Bay District Allowable Sale Quantity as required in the Oregon and California Act of 1937 (O&C Act) of August 28, 1937. The BLM has a statutory obligation under the 1937 O&C Act to manage suitable commercial forest lands revested by the government from the Oregon and California Railroad grant for permanent forest production in accordance with the sustained yield principle.

Public comments:

The *Middle Creek CTs II* Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public comment on April 22, 2006. The comment period closed on May 22, 2006.

One response was received from an interested party who expressed their support for the *Middle Creek CTs II* project. Comments and questions from two other interested parties were also submitted. There were several comments that expressed disagreement with the proposed action or parts of the proposed projects. After careful consideration of the comments we have determined that the disagreement lies mainly with implementation of the Coos Bay District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan. We recognize this disagreement; however, these types of comments are beyond the scope of this EA. The basic decision to build roads, to harvest timber, and to select the appropriate logging systems has already been made in the land use plan.

Some of the comments and questions concern specific language or discussion of effects contained in the EA. We have made edits and clarification in the EA where we have determined it to be appropriate. These edits may include consideration of comments regarding “new information” about the resource impacts of forest management. The EA prepared for this sale and a Finding of No Significant Impact has been documented and these documents are available for inspection at the Coos Bay District Office. I conclude that these edits conform to the applicable land use plan and that the environmental assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact fully cover the proposed action and constitute BLM’s compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action Alternative as it applies to the Mast Creek CT timber sale described in the EA OR125-04-17 for the *Middle Creek CTs II* project.

The design features will be implemented as described in the EA and in the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan* and its *Record of Decision* (RMP) (BLM, May 1995) that conform with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) and its *Record of Decision* (ROD) (Interagency, 1994).

Proposed activities that may affect listed wildlife species within the project area were submitted for consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with Section 7(A)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 [16 U.S.C. 1536(A)(2) and (A)(4) as amended]. A Letter of Concurrence was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in which they concur that the proposed actions are not likely to adversely affect the northern spotted owl, the marbled murrelet, or the American bald eagle.

There are no ESA listed fish species in the *Middle Creek CTs II* project area. Proposed activities in the *Middle Creek CTs* project area were determined to have no effect on Oregon Coast coho, prior to it being removed from the ESA list on January 16, 2006. The project actions were determined to “not adversely affect” Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

On July 25, 2007, the Under Secretary of the Department of Interior signed a new Survey and Manage Record of Decision, Complete Title: Record of Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, that removed the survey and manage requirements from all of the BLM resource management plans (RMPs) within the range of the northern spotted owl. In any case, this project falls within at least one of the exceptions listed in the modified October 11, 2006 injunction.

Rationale:

The Proposed Action Alternative for the Mast Creek CT timber sale is the alternative that most closely meets the purpose and need described in the EA and the intent of the ROD for the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan for restoring desired forest stand conditions in the General Forest Management Area and Riparian Reserve land use allocations.

The decision is consistent with the ROD for the *Northwest Forest Plan* and the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* as amended.

Administrative Remedies:

In accordance with *Forest Management Regulations* at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision to offer the Mast Creek CT timber sale, as partial replacement volume for the Broken Buck timber sale, will not become effective or be subject to formal protest until the *Notice of Forest Management Decision* is published ". . . in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located." For this project, the *Notice of Forest Management Decision* will be published in *The World* newspaper on November 23, 2007.

Paul Fontaine (acting)

Paul T. Flanagan
Acting Umpqua Field Manager

11/19/2007
Date

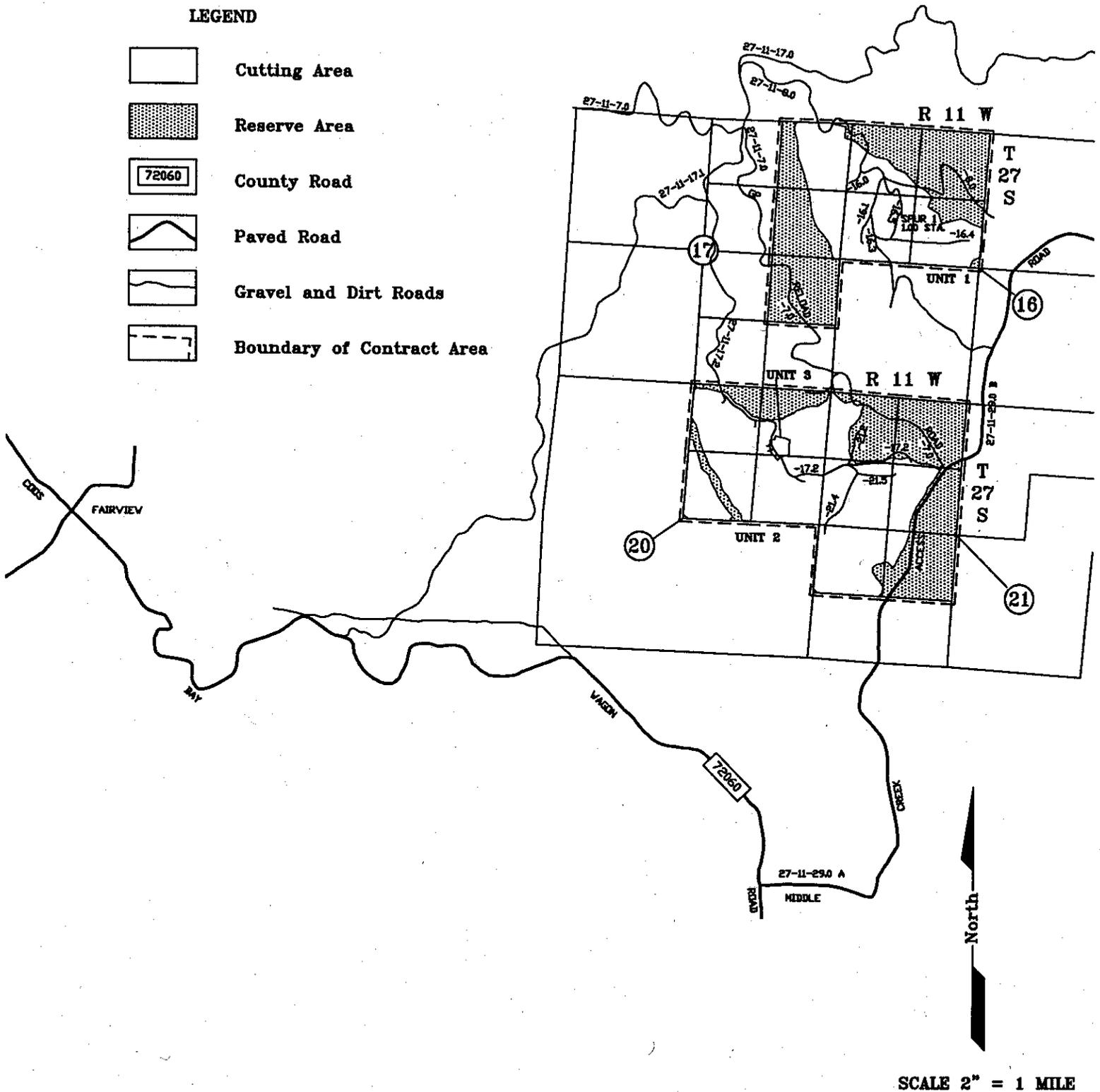
TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08-04
 EXHIBIT A-1
 Page 1 of 1
 Mast Creek CT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 16, 17, 20 & 21 Will. Mer.

LEGEND

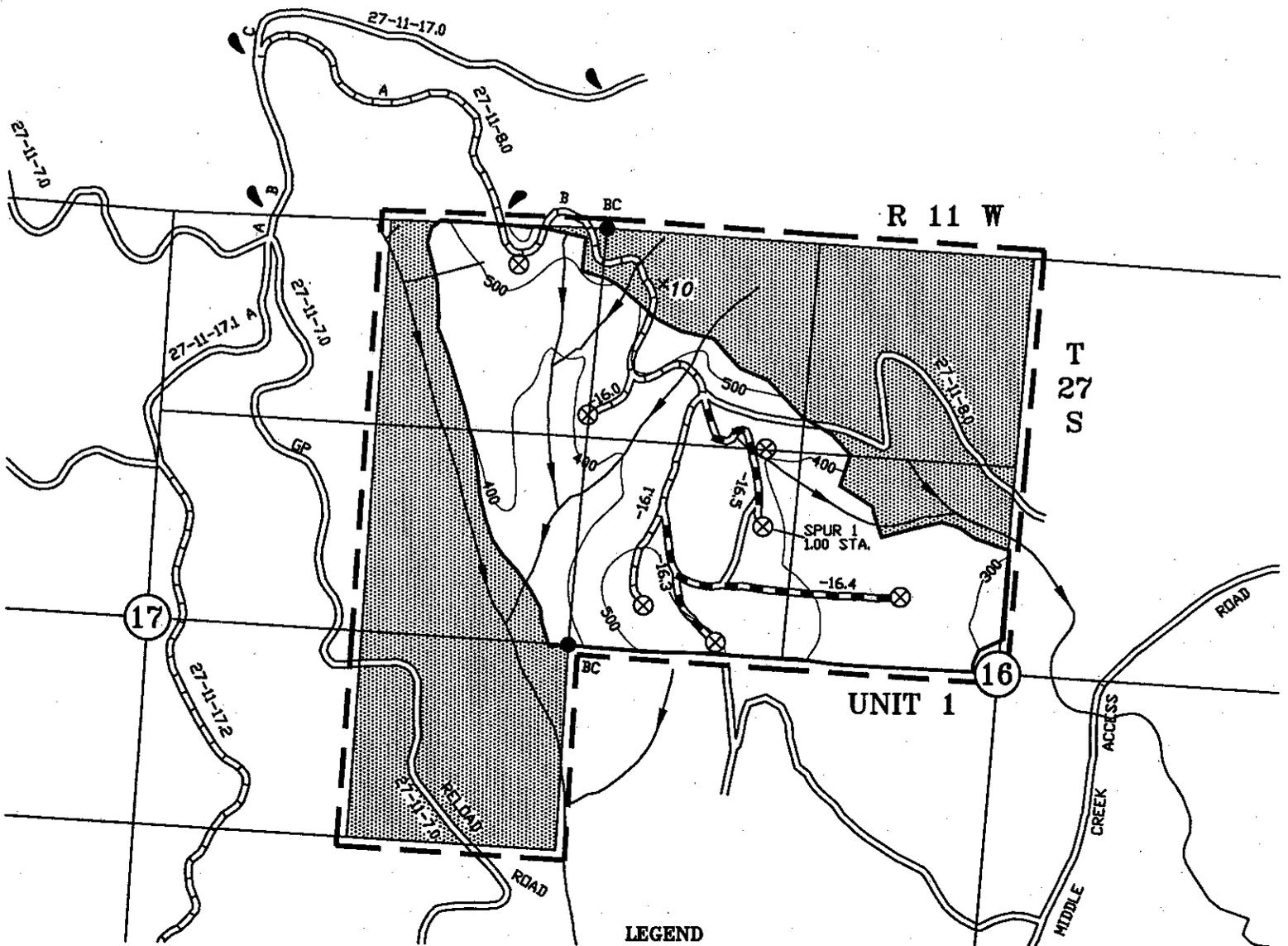
-  Cutting Area
-  Reserve Area
-  County Road
-  Paved Road
-  Gravel and Dirt Roads
-  Boundary of Contract Area



TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08-04
 EXHIBIT A
 Page 1 of 4
 Mast Creek CT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 16,17,20 & 21 Will. Mer.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Partial Cut Area | | Boundary of Special Cutting Area, Posted and Painted |
| | Special Cutting Area | | Existing Road |
| | Reserve Area | | Road to be Improved |
| | Boundary of Cutting Area, Blazed, Posted and Painted | | Road to be Renovated |
| | Boundary of Contract Area | | Stream Channel |
| | Corner Found | | Proposed Landing |
| | Segment Break | | Roadside Hazard 1-Side |
| | Road to be Constructed | | Roadside Hazard 2-Sides |
| | | | Approximate Location and Number of Trees Marked for Cutting in the Reserve |

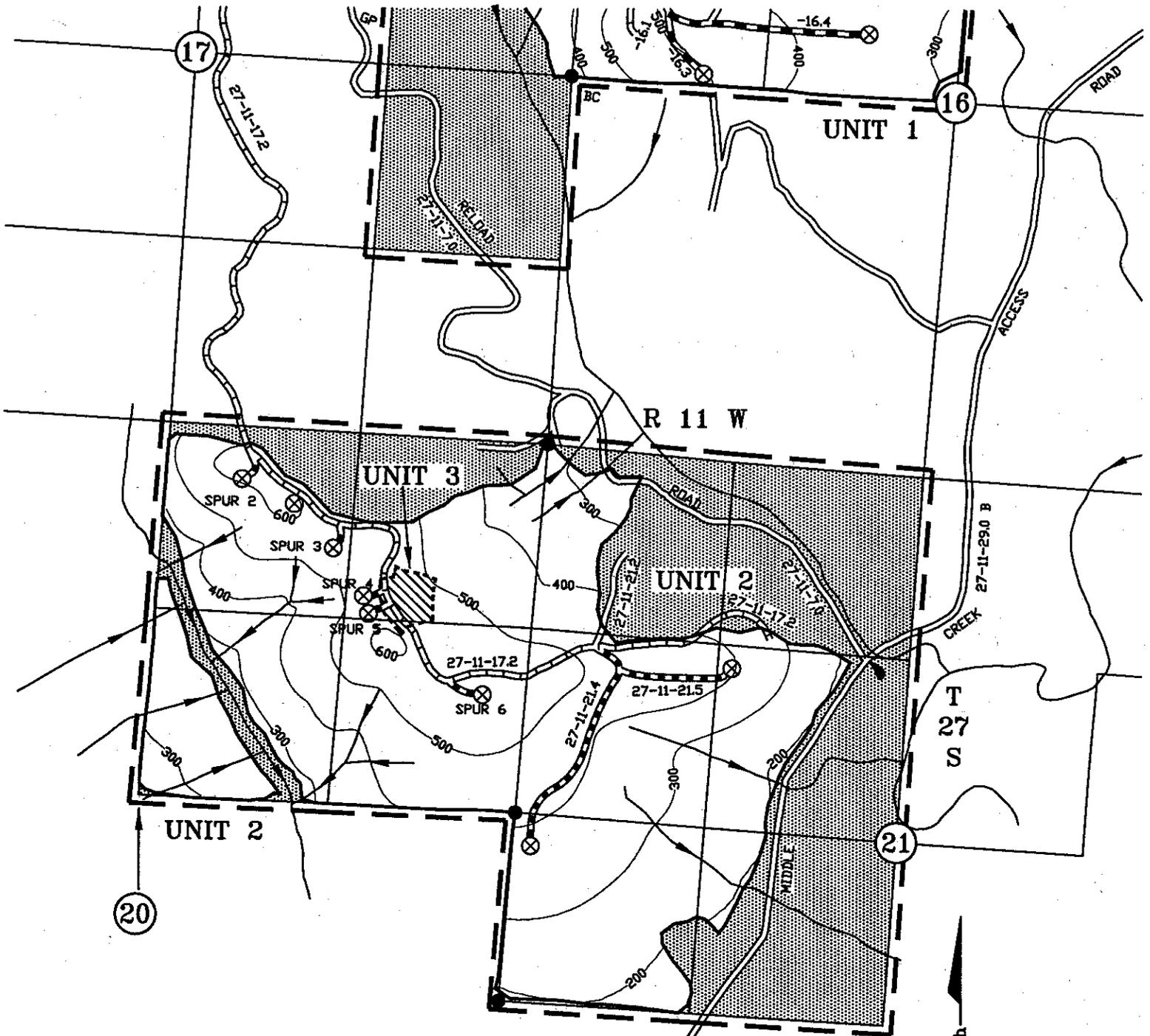


SCALE 1" = 1000'
 CONTOUR INTERVAL = 100'

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08-04
 EXHIBIT A
 Page 2 of 4
 Mast Creek CT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 16,17,20 & 21 Will. Mer.



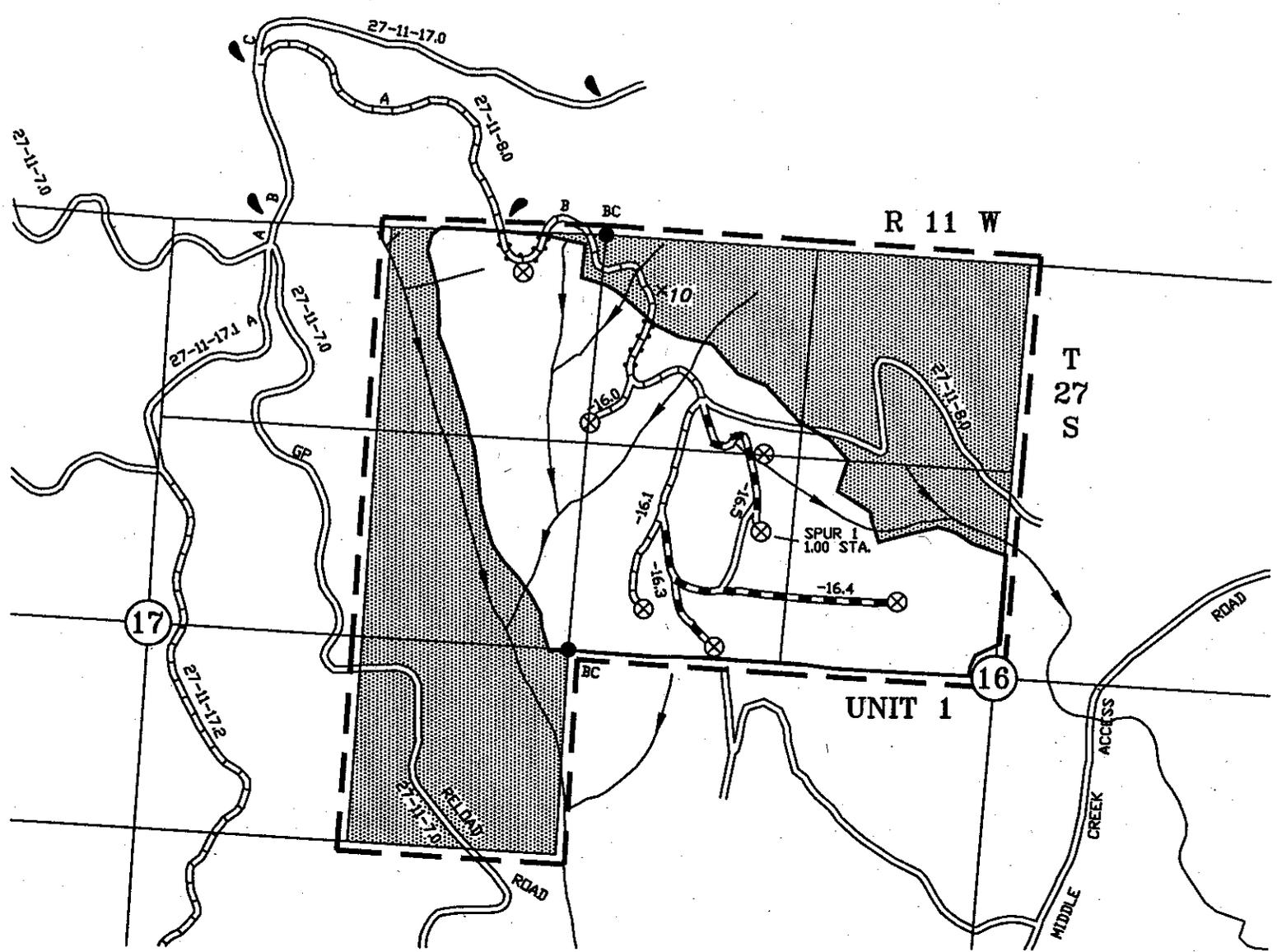
UNIT 1	129 AC
UNIT 2	241 AC
UNIT 3	3 AC
TOTAL	373 AC
RIGHT OF WAY	2 AC
RESERVE	305 AC
TOTAL CONTRACT	680 AC

SCALE 1" = 1000'
 CONTOUR INTERVAL = 100'

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08-04
EXHIBIT A
Page 3 of 4
Mast Creek CT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 16,17,20 & 21 Will. Mer.

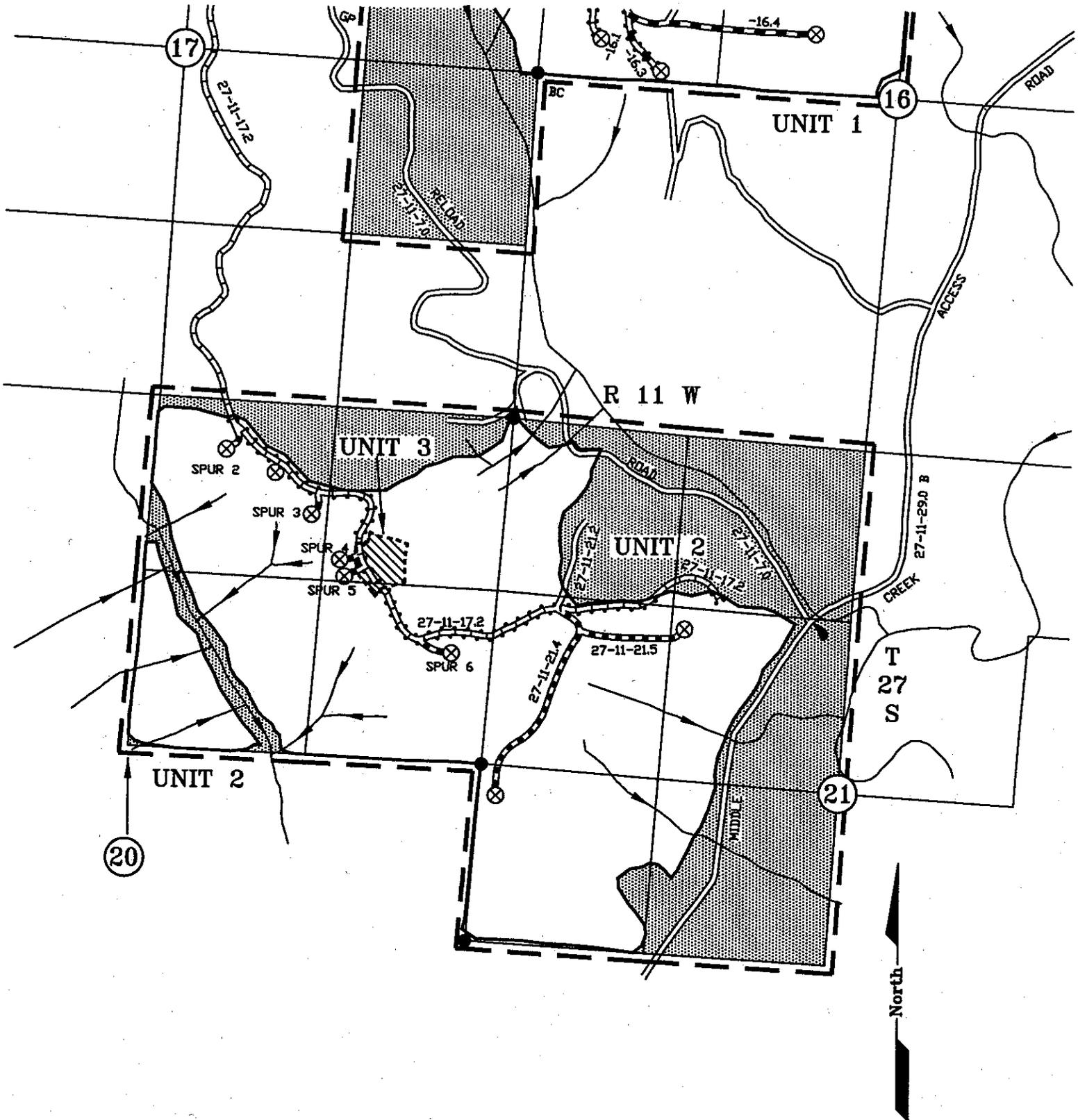


SCALE 1" = 1000'

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08-04
EXHIBIT A
Page 4 of 4
Mast Creek CT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 16,17,20 & 21 Will. Mer.



SCALE 1" = 1000'