

DECISION RECORD & CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Project Name: Silviculture Treatments (CE OR116-08-19)

BLM Office: Ashland R.A., Medford District. Phone # (541) 618-2296

DESCRIPTION & LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action will involve silviculture land treatments covering approximately 3,000 acres in the Ashland Resource Area. **Precommercial Thinning/Manual Brushing** – will be completed on approximately 2500 acres. This treatment requires mechanical chainsaws to thin conifer plantations up to (10) inch diameters and wildfire areas, using a 12 to 25 (foot spacing). All brush species shall be cut during this treatment. **Radius Scalping** - This vegetation management treatment will require a 2-3 foot radius scalp on approximately 550 acres. Radius scalping will require clearing (hoeing) all woody and non-wood vegetation (grass/herbaceous plants) down to mineral soil around each seedling. **Manual Grubbing** - This treatment shall require a 4-6 foot radius manual grub that will be completed on approximately 277 acres. Manual grubbing requires digging all woody vegetation with (roots) to at least 2" depth around each seedling. For the grubbing treatments-chainsaws may be used to cut slash around the seedlings, before performing the manual grubbing of vegetation. **Gopher Trapping** - will be completed on approximately 23 acres, all located within the (CSNM) Cascade Siskiyou National Monument. All of these silviculture treatments will be scheduled for completion between June 1, 2008 and December 31, 2010.

Planned Treatment Periods:

- Precommercial Thinning/Manual Brushing -Year around, except during high fire danger.
- Gopher Trapping - June through October.
- Radius Scalping - February through November.
- Manual Grubbing - January through May.

Project Design Features:

- Areas designated as "Special Plant Area" on project maps contain protected Special Status Plants where ground disturbing silviculture treatments will not be allowed. Boundaries of "Special Plant Areas" are flagged using orange tied with yellow and black-striped plastic flagging. The unit maps will be issued to the Contractor at the prework meeting. Noxious weed preventative measures will be employed. Unit specific measures are included in the attached spreadsheet.
- During January 1 - August 31 work activities shall not take place within 0.25 miles of active bald eagle nests or roosts or within 0.5 miles of bald eagle nests or roosts. These active eagle areas will be identified on individual unit maps and issued to the Contractor at the prework meeting.
- During January 1 - July 15, work activities will not be allowed due to Great Gray Owl or Northern Spotted Owl nesting area activity. Active Owl areas will be identified on individual unit maps and issued to the Contractor at the prework meeting.
- Authorization for access behind locked gates in the CSNM will be required for all Bureau of Land Management Contract Administrators and all Contractors crews.
- No precommercial thinning/vegetation brushing shall be allowed to occur in the CSNM, until after the Record of Decision is authorized, and if the management plan allows for young stand vegetation management to occur in the future within the CSNM.

Watershed Protection (Soils, Water Quality, Hydrological Functions Riparian Reserves):

All streams and water bodies will receive the following No-treatment buffers.

Stream Type or Feature	No Treatment Buffers (on each side of streams and around water bodies)
Fish-bearing	50 feet
Perennial	50 feet
Intermittent (long-duration)	25 feet
Intermittent (short-duration)	25 feet
Dry draws	25 feet
Unstable and potentially unstable dry draws	25 feet
Unstable areas other than above	Use buffer for associated water feature
Springs, seeps, wetlands, ponds	25 feet

Fish Bearing Streams

Generally, the majority of the proposed treatment units are far from listed Coho Critical Habitat (CCH) and greater than ½ mile from any fish bearing channels, with the following exceptions:

Unit	Treatment Type	Stream	Fish present	Proximate distance to creek	Prescribed Buffer size
Alexander Gulch #2	PCT/Brushing	Star Gulch	Cutthroat	50 feet	50 feet
Alexander Gulch #4	PCT/Brushing	Star Gulch	Cutthroat	1/3 mile	50 feet
Alexander Gulch # 17	PCT/Brushing	Alexander Gulch	Cutthroat	150 feet	50 feet
Alexander Gulch # 18	PCT/Brushing	Alexander Gulch	Cutthroat	½ mile	50 feet
Lightning Ben #3A	PCT/Brushing	Lightning Gulch	Steelhead (CCH)	50 feet	50 feet
Lick Gulch # 8	Scalping/Grubbing	Little Applegate River	Steelhead (CCH)	500 feet	50 feet
Lower Carnegie #31	PCT/Brushing	Little Applegate River	Steelhead (CCH)	½ miles	50 feet
Miller Forest #3	PCT/Brushing	Right Fork Forest Creek	Cutthroat	150 feet	50 feet
Miller Forest #4	Scalping/Grubbing	Right Fork Forest Creek	Cutthroat	¼ mile	50 feet
Miller Forest #6	PCT/Brushing	Forest Creek	Cutthroat	1/3 mile	50 feet
Squires Peak #1	PCT/Brushing	Bishop Creek	Steelhead (CCH)	100 feet	50 feet
Birdseye Fire #5-3	PCT/Brushing	Birdseye Creek	Steelhead (CCH)	1/3 mile	50 feet
Thompson Creek #6	PCT/Brushing	Ninemile and Thompson	Coho (CCH)	300 feet	50 feet

		Creeks			
Conde Flat #2	PCT/Brushing	Conde Creek	Cutthroat	¼ mile	50 feet
Rosebud #3	PCT/Brushing	Keene Creek	Redband Trout	1/3 miles	50 feet
Upper Beaver #1	Scalping/Grubbing	Beaver Creek	Redband Trout	1/3 mile	50 feet

PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in compliance with and is tiered to the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)* as amended by the *Record of Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from the Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (USDI 2007)*. The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan incorporated 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 the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA and USDI 1994)*.

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Department of the Interior Manual 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 provides for a review of the following criteria for categorical exclusion to determine if exceptions apply to the proposed action based on actions which may:

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Categorical Exclusion Exception</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|---|
| () | (X) | 1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety. |
| () | (X) | 2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. |
| () | (X) | 3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan. |
| () | (X) | 4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. |
| () | (X) | 5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. |
| () | (X) | 6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. (40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)). |
| () | (X) | 7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. |
| () | (X) | 8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. |
| () | (X) | 9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. |
| () | (X) | 10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). |

- () (X) 11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
- () (X) 12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The proposed action has been reviewed against the twelve criteria for an exception to a categorical exclusion and does not fall under any exception as identified in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2. The project qualifies as a categorical exclusion 516 DM 11, Section 11.9, C (3).

Bob Pasley	Lead Operations Forester/Silviculture	March 31, 2008
Prepared by	Title	Date

Ed Reilly	NEPA Coordinator	May 21, 2008
Reviewed by	Title	Date

DECISION

Based on the NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW above, I have determined that the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11, Section 11.9, C (3), involves no significant impact to the human environment, and that no further environmental analysis is required.

for 
 John Gerritsma
 Field Manager; Ashland Resource Area

5/27/08
 Date