

“DRAFT”

Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

**Northeast Elk Creek
Density Management**

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
EA# OR-104-08-05

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Swiftwater Field Office proposes density management of approximately 1,645 acres of mid-seral forest stands, 40-77 years old, in five separate proposed timbersales: Bear Bones (344 acres), Bucko (266 acres), Cox Pit (247 acres), General Lee (353 acres), and Mr. Bennet (435 acres). Within the 1,645 acres, approximately 35 acres would be cleared or brushed for spur right-of-ways or roads to access the harvest areas.

These proposed sales are located in the Elk Creek/Umpqua River Fifth-field Watershed within Connectivity/Diversity Block (971 acres) and Riparian Reserve (674 acres) Land Use Allocations and would yield approximately 16.4 million board feet (16.4 MMBF) of timber in support of local and regional manufacturers and economies. The proposed units are located in the Elk Creek/Upper Umpqua Fifth-Field Watershed in Sections 27 and 35; T21S R04W; Willamette Meridian (W.M.) Sections 9, 15, 20, 21, 23, and 27; T22S R04W; W.M.; and Section 3; T23S R04W; W.M.

Test for Significant Impacts.

1. Has significant impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (1))?
 Yes No

Remarks: Any impacts would be consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the 1994 *Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS).

2. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (2))?
 Yes No

Remarks: The additional amount of down woody debris (i.e. four to eight tons per acre) would not dramatically increase the fire risk to the area. The primary carrier of fires is the fine fuels of less than three inches in diameter. These fine fuels generated in the harvest process would mostly degrade within two years after harvest. The homes in the area are not adjacent to the projects and therefore would not have increased fire risk (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 25).

Treatment of logging slash by prescribed fire has the potential to affect air quality locally. Burning will be accomplished under guidelines established by the Oregon Smoke Management Plan and Visibility Protection Plan to avoid adverse effects. Any impacts to local air quality will be localized and of short duration, consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS, pp. 4-9 to 4-12).

3. Adversely effects such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains or ecologically significant or

critical areas including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (3))?

Yes No

Remarks: Unique geographic characteristics (such as those listed above) are absent from the project area and would not be affected.

4. Has highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (4))?

Yes No

Remarks: The BLM conducts density management regularly across western Oregon. There is also a wide body of literature describing the environmental effects of such forest management activity. No effects are expected to be highly controversial. The public was afforded several opportunities to comment on the current proposal, and none of the comments received indicated controversy over the nature of the effects on the human environment.

5. Has highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks to the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (5))?

Yes No

Remarks: The risks to the human environment from the project were analyzed in the Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA and found not to be highly uncertain or unique.

6. Establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (6))?

Yes No

Remarks: The advertisement, auction, and award of a timber sale contract allowing the harvest of trees is a well-established practice and would not establish a precedent for future actions.

7. Is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (7))?

Yes No

Remarks: The impacts to forest vegetation (pgs. 15-17), wildlife (pgs. 17-24), fire and fuels management (pgs. 24-25), soils (pgs. 25-30), hydrology (pgs. 30-35), fish populations and habitat (pgs. 35-40) were analyzed in the *Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA* and found not to be significant.

8. Has adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures, or 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 (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (8))?

Yes No

Remarks: The BLM has completed Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 43). No cultural resources were discovered (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 13). It has been determined that there will be no effect to cultural or historical resources *Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 43).

9. 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 (40 CFR §1508.27(b)

(9))?

Botanical Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Fish Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Wildlife Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Remarks: Surveys did not identify the presence of any federally threatened or endangered botanical species; therefore the proposed action would have no effect on listed botanical species (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 40).

Northeast Elk Creek Density Management would have no effect on the Oregon Coast coho or its critical habitat. The closest Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Coho or Chinook salmon is approximately 0.1 miles downstream from the project and would not be adversely affected by the project (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pgs. 37-39).

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is in process for the northern spotted owl and its critical habitat. Results of that consultation will be disclosed in the FONSI issued with the Decision Record.

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (10))?

Yes No

Remarks: The measures described above ensure that Northeast Elk Creek Density Management would be consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws. The impacts of the silvicultural treatment on the human environment would not exceed those anticipated by the 1994 Roseburg District PRMP/EIS.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13212, the BLM must consider the effects of this decision on the President’s National Energy Policy. A high-voltage transmission line and a natural gas pipeline are adjacent to or within the Northeast Elk Creek project area but there are no known energy resources with commercial potential within the project area. Trees would be felled away from the transmission lines, and ground-based equipment would not be allowed to operate within the transmission line and pipeline corridor, except on designated skid trails and roads (*Northeast Elk Creek Density Management EA*, pg. 13). There would be no known adverse effect on National Energy Policy.

Based on the analysis of potential impacts contained in the environmental assessment, I have determined that Northeast Elk Creek Density Management would not have a significant impact on the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and that an environmental impact statement is not required. I have determined that the effects of the silvicultural treatment would be within those anticipated and already analyzed in the *Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS, 1994) and will be in conformance with the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP) for the Roseburg District, approved by the Oregon/Washington State Director on June 2, 1995.

 Marci L. Todd, Field Manager
 Swiftwater Field Office

 Date