

# “DRAFT”

## Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

### Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District  
EA# OR-104-07-10

The proposed commercial thinning and density management would be conducted under four timber sales named Adams Apple, Cedar Shingle, Lurch, and Slow Lane encompassing approximately 1,160 acres of 37 to 54 year-old second-growth forest stands. The proposed units are located in the Elk Creek/Upper Umpqua Fifth-Field Watershed in Sections 7, 15, 19, 23, and 35; T23S R04W; Willamette Meridian (W.M.) Section 13; T23S R05W; W.M.; and Section 3; T24S R04W; W.M. Within these 1,160 acres, approximately 14 acres would be removed for the development of permanent and temporary spur roads.

This project is within the Connectivity/Diversity Block (192 acres), General Forest Management Area (536 acres), and Riparian Reserve (430 acres) Land Use Allocations and would contribute approximately 11.6 million board feet of timber to help meet the Roseburg District’s annual allowable sale quantity of 45 million board feet declared in the Roseburg District *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP, p. 8).

#### 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 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 increase in fuel loadings of four tons per acre would not dramatically increase the fire risk to the area for several reasons (EA, pgs. 27-28):
  - Two of the proposed sales (Adams Apple and Lurch) have several gates along the access road which would decrease the risk of human-caused wildfires by limiting access to the public.;

- the portion of Slow Lane that occurs within the WUI boundary has no homes near by and the surrounding fuels around the project area are not likely to carry fire;
- the proposed Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning and Density Management is outside of the WUI boundary; and
- down woody debris created at landings by the proposed action would be machine piled and burned to reduce concentrated fuel loads. The remaining fuels created by the proposed action would be predominately small (i.e. less than three inches in diameter) and scattered over the harvest areas, which would degrade within two years after harvest decreasing the risk of a fire building in intensity to consume larger diameter fuels.

Treatment of logging slash by prescribed fire has the potential to affect air quality locally. Burning would 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 would 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:** A scoping letter was sent on August 24, 2007 to 31 adjacent landowners, landowners along the proposed haul route, and interested members of the general public. Comments were accepted until September 25, 2007 and six comments were received. Comments received typically concerned the design of the proposed project. However, no comments were received that I consider highly controversial.

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 proposed project were analyzed and found not to be highly uncertain or unique (EA, Appendix A, pgs. 54-56).
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 cumulative impacts to forest vegetation (pg. 21), wildlife (pgs. 26-27), fire and fuels management (pg. 28), hydrology (pgs. 37-38), soils (pgs. 32-33), fish populations and habitat (pg. 43) were analyzed in the Elkhead 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 conducted surveys for cultural resources and completed Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (EA, pgs. 17, 47). No cultural resources were discovered (EA, pg. 17). It has been determined that there would be no effect to scientific, cultural, or historical resources (EA, pg. 47).
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  Yes  No  
 Fish Species  Yes  No  
 Wildlife Species  Yes  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 (EA, pg. 45).

On February 4, 2008 NOAA Fisheries announced it is listing the Oregon coast coho salmon evolutionary significant unit (ESU) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and included the designation of critical habitat (EA, pg. 42). The Swiftwater Field Office is in the process of consulting with NOAA Fisheries regarding the effects of the proposed Elkhead project on the Oregon Coast coho salmon. The Adams Apple, Slow Lane, and Lurch timber sales were found to have no effect on the Oregon Coast coho or their critical habitat (EA, pg. 47). The Cedar Shingle timber sale was found to be a "not likely to adversely affect (NLAA)" on the Oregon Coast coho salmon and its critical habitat. A Biological Analysis (BA) for the Cedar Shingle sale would be submitted to NOAA Fisheries at the Level One meeting in May, 2008. The results of this consultation would be disclosed in the Decision Records for the Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning and Density Management (EA, pg. 47).

The closest Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Coho salmon or Chinook salmon is approximately 0.10 miles in the proposed Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning and Density Management (EA, Appendix F, pg. 64). However, the proposed project would not adversely affect EFH in the Elk Creek Watershed (EA, pgs. 43-44).

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been completed for the federally threatened bald eagle, northern spotted owl, and marbled murrelet and for spotted owl critical habitat (EA, pg. 47).

A Letter of Concurrence was received from the USFWS (*Reinitiation of consultation on Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management FY 2005-2008 Management Activities* [Ref. # 1-15-05-I-0511]) dated June 24, 2005 which concurred with the Roseburg District's conclusion that the proposed commercial thinning or density management activities are not likely to adversely affect Northern spotted owls and are not likely to adversely affect the Northern spotted owl as a result of disturbance (EA, pgs. 23-24). Critical Habitat Unit OR-24 would continue to provide for the survival and recovery of spotted owls under the proposed action. Project design features (EA, pgs. 12-16) would be implemented in compliance with the letters of concurrence.

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 insure that Elkhead Commercial Thinning and 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 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. Within the project area, there are no known energy resources with commercial potential. There are no pipelines, electrical transmission lines, or energy producing or processing facilities. As a consequence, 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 Elkhead Commercial Thinning and 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 would 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.

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Marci L. Todd, Field Manager  
Swiftwater Field Office

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Date