United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE
1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459
Web Address: http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay E-mail: OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov
Telephone: (541) 756-0100 Toll Free: (888) 809-0839 Fax: (541) 751-4303

1792/5400
Middle Creek CTs II
EA OR125-04-17
Bitter Cherry
OR120-TS08-02

Dear Citizen:

Enclosed is copy of the Decision Documentation and maps for the "Bitter Cherry" (OR120-TS08-02) timber sale. The units in this sale were 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,

/S/ ***A. Dennis Turowski***

A. Dennis Turowski
Umpqua Field Manager

2 Enclosures:
Decision Documentation (4pp)
Exhibit A and A-1 sale map (4pp)

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TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

5400/1792 (OR120)
Bitter Cherry
OR120-TS08-02
Middle Creek CTs II EA
OR125-04-17

Decision Documentation

Bitter Cherry Timber Sale
Analyzed in
Environmental Assessment OR125-04-17, Middle Creek CTs II

Background:

The Bitter Cherry timber sale includes three sales analyzed in the Middle Creek CTs II EA OR125-04-17: Cherry Creek CT2, Cherry 27 CT2, and Cherry Park CT.

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 Bitter Cherry timber sale is part of the Middle Creek CTs II project located in T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sections 23, 24, 25, 27, 35 and T. 28 S., R. 11 W., Section 3, 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 Bitter Cherry timber sale:

	Thinning Acres	Alder Conversion Acres	New Road Construction Miles	Road Renovation & Improvement Miles	Road Decommission/ Closure Miles
EA Estimate	410	89	1.5	10.5	3.7
Field Verified	325	110	2.06	10.77	8.2

Harvest

- The harvest area includes thinning units with 291 acres in the GFMA and 34 acres in the RR, and alder conversion units with 81 acres in the GFMA and 29 acres in the RR.
- Variable width stream buffers 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 and ground based logging systems.
- Road decommissioning of 8.2 miles consists of barricading, scarifying, water-barring, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching 22 rock surface and natural surface spur roads as necessary to stabilize road surfaces.
- Approximately 4,454 MBF of timber is scheduled for removal. This includes approximately 3,833 MBF from the GFMA which contributes to the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ), with the remaining 621 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 Bitter Cherry 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"* (USDI 1995, 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. Replace red alder dominated stands in the Riparian Reserve with conifer on sites that previously supported conifer stands.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Provide cost effective management that will enable implementation of these management objectives while providing collateral economic benefits to society.

7. 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 Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. 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. As stated in the Notice of Sale for the *Bitter Cherry CT* timber sale, these EA documents are available for inspection at the Coos Bay District Office. These edits may include consideration of comments regarding "new information" about the resource impacts of forest management. 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 three combined Cherry Creek sales, now called *Bitter Cherry 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) (USDI,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 and the marbled murrelet.

Based on analysis by the Umpqua Field Office fisheries biologist, it has been concluded that the proposed activities in the *Middle Creek CTs II* project area will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). It has also been determined that this will have no effect on Oregon Coast coho, a species listed by the National Marine Fisheries Service and its Critical Habitat. Therefore, consultation is not warranted.

Rationale:

The Proposed Action Alternative for the *Bitter Cherry 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 for this timber sale will not become effective or be subject 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 this project, the *Notice of Sale* will be published in *The World* newspaper on June 26th, 2008.

/S/ ***A. Dennis Turowski***

A. Dennis Turowski
Umpqua Field Manager

June 25, 2008

Date

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI–BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 08–02
EXHIBIT A–1
Page 1 of 1
Bitter Cherry CT

T. 27S., R. 11W., Sec. 23, 24, 25, 27, 35, Will. Mer.
T. 28S., R. 11W., Sec. 3, Will. Mer.

Reserve Area

Boundary of Cutting Area, Blazed, Posted and Painted

Boundary of Contract Area

SCALE 2" = 1 MILE

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI–BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

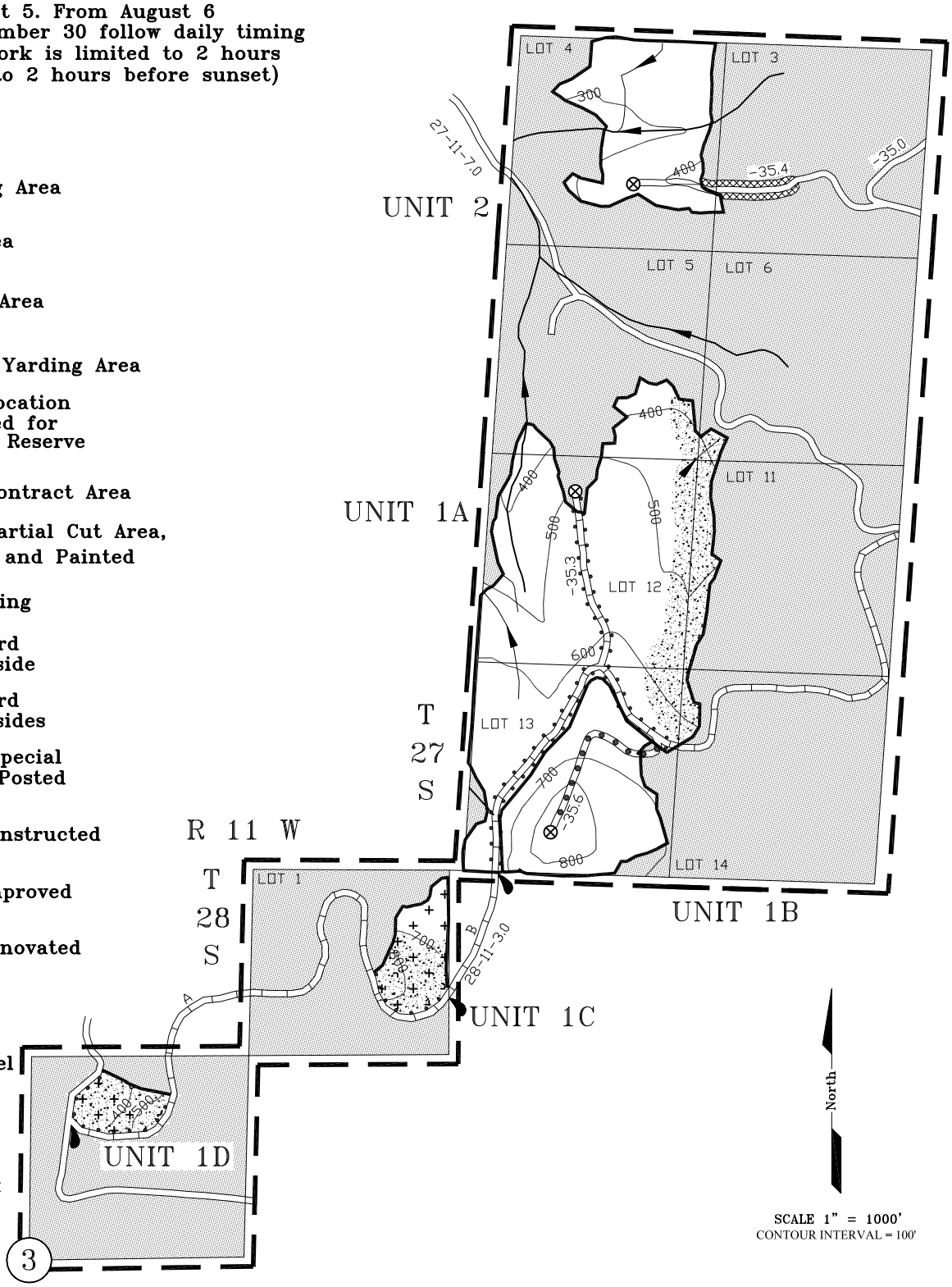
T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 35, Will. Mer.
T. 28 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 3, Will. Mer.

SALE NO. 08–02
EXHIBIT A

Bitter Cherry CT

LEGEND

- **Seasonally Restricted Area (MM) or (NSO). No timber operations from March 1 Through August 5. From August 6 Through September 30 follow daily timing restrictions (work is limited to 2 hours after sunrise to 2 hours before sunset)**
- **Reserve Area**
- **Special Cutting Area**
- **Partial Cut Area**
- **Cable Logging Area**
- **Ground–Based Yarding Area**
- **Approximate Location of Trees Marked for Cutting in the Reserve**
- **Boundary of Contract Area**
- **Boundary of Partial Cut Area, Blazed, Posted and Painted**
- **Proposed Landing**
- **Roadside Hazard Reduction, 1–side**
- **Roadside Hazard Reduction, 2–sides**
- **Boundary of Special Cutting Area. Posted and Painted**
- **Road to be Constructed**
- **Road to be Improved**
- **Road to be Renovated**
- **Existing Road**
- **Stream Channel**
- **Corner Found**
- **Segment Break**



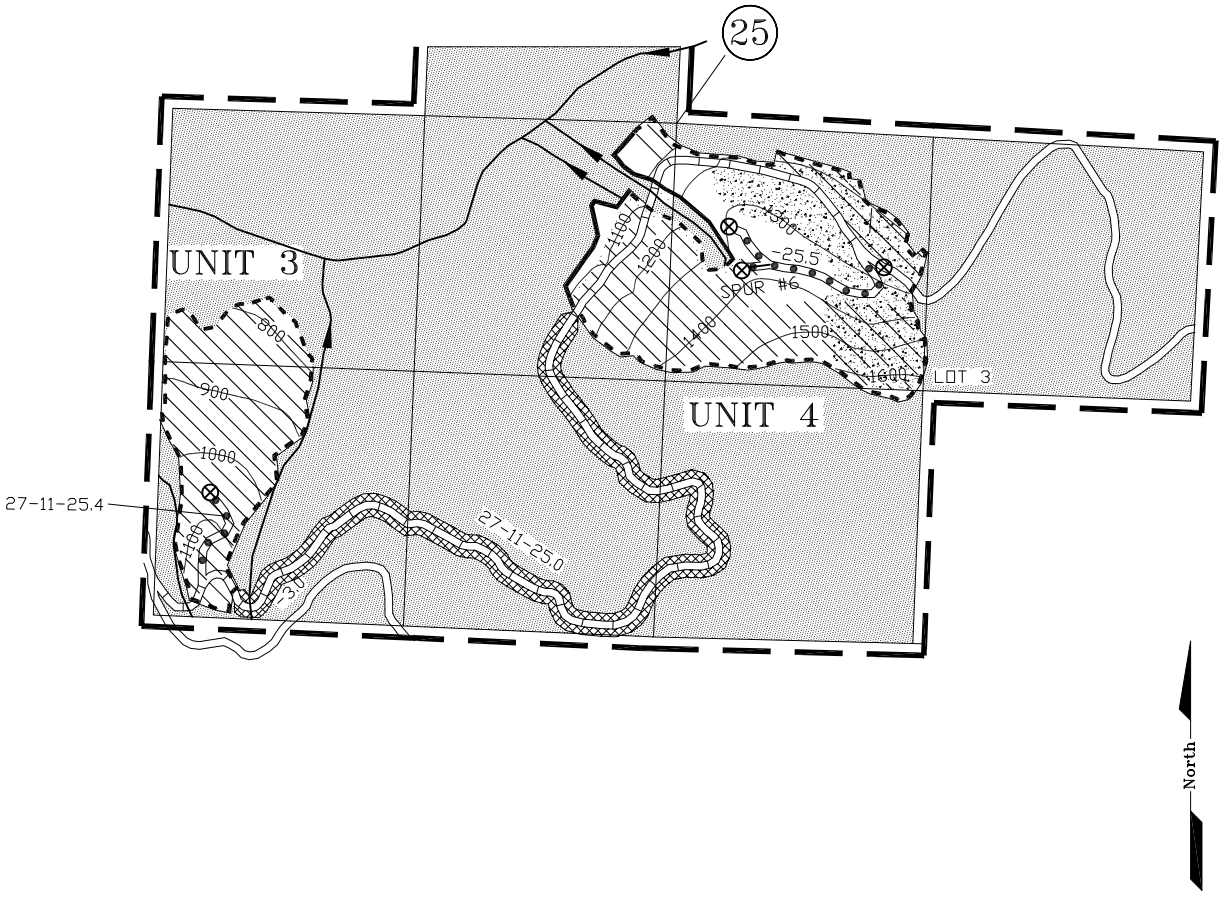
SCALE 1" = 1000'
CONTOUR INTERVAL = 100'

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI–BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 25, Will. Mer.

SALE NO. 08–02
EXHIBIT A

Bitter Cherry CT



SCALE 1" = 1000'
CONTOUR INTERVAL = 100'

LEGEND

Unit Area Totals

Unit 1	89 Ac
Unit 2	18 Ac
Unit 3	18 Ac
Unit 4	36 Ac
Unit 5	83 Ac
Unit 6	21 Ac
Unit 7	6 Ac
Unit 8	76 Ac
Unit 9	14 Ac
Unit 10	12 Ac
Unit 11	42 Ac
Unit 12	20 Ac
Total	435 Ac

Partial Cut Area

Unit 1A	63 Ac
Unit 1B	18 Ac
Unit 1C	6 Ac
Unit 1D	2 Ac
Unit 2	18 Ac
Unit 4	10 Ac
Unit 5A	64 Ac
Unit 5B	18 Ac
Unit 5C	1 Ac
Unit 6	21 Ac
Unit 7	6 Ac
Unit 8	24 Ac
Unit 10	12 Ac
Unit 11	42 Ac
Unit 12	20 Ac
Total	325 Ac

Special Cutting Area

Unit 3	18 Ac
Unit 4	26 Ac
Unit 8	52 Ac
Unit 9	14 Ac
Total	110 Ac

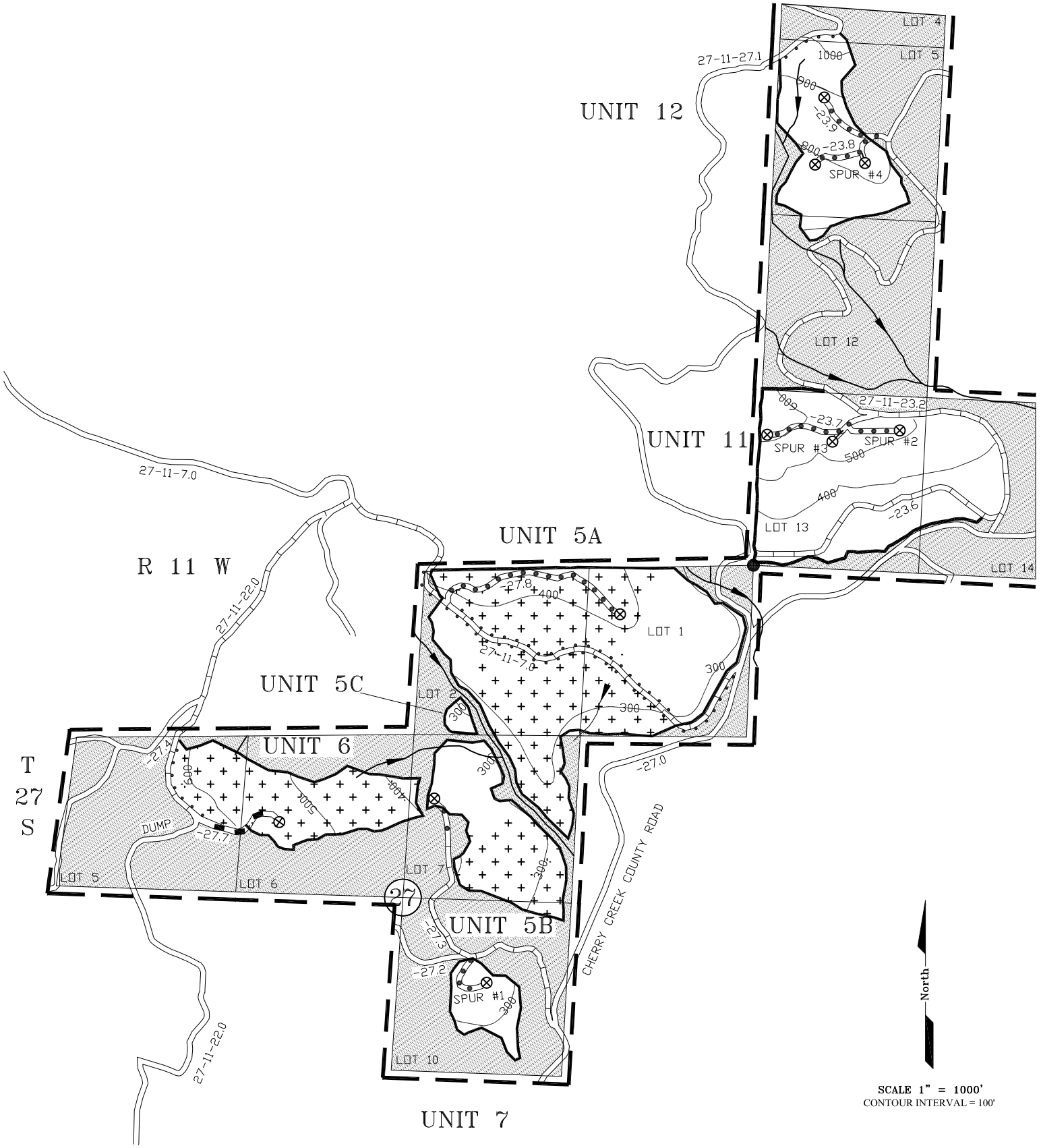
Contract Area

Unit Total	435 Ac
R/W	10 Ac
Reserve	1144 Ac
Total	1589 Ac

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI–BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

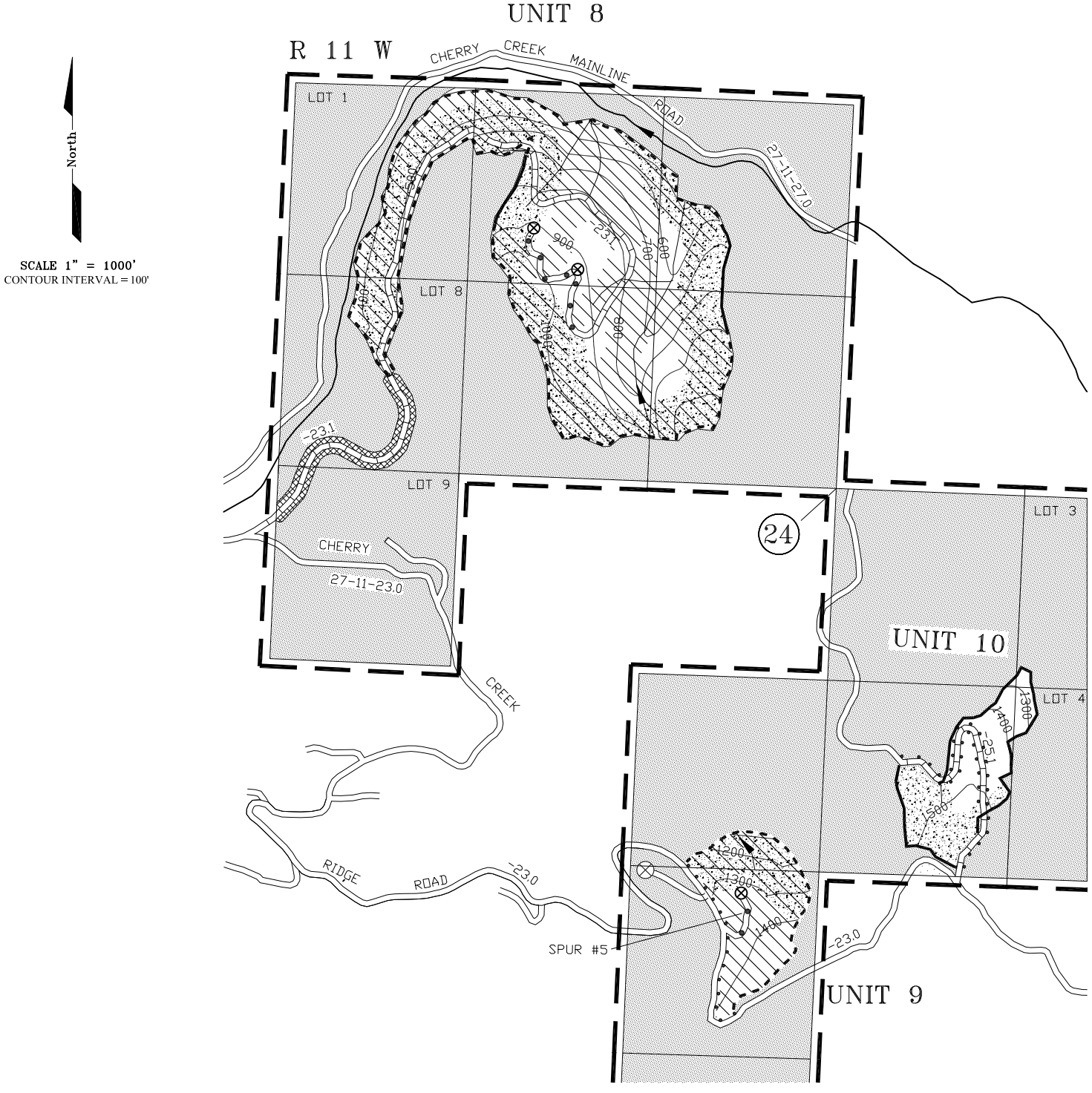
T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 23, 27, Will. Mer.

SALE NO. 08–02
EXHIBIT A
Page 3 of 4
Bitter Cherry CT



TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
USDI–BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

T. 27 S., R. 11 W., Sec. 23, 24, 25, Will. Mer.

SALE NO. 08–02
EXHIBIT A

Bitter Cherry CT