

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

In Reply Refer To:

1792/5400 (ORC030)

North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study

EA OR125-08-01

North Soup Rethin

OR120-TS09-03

April 30, 2009

Dear Citizen:

We have prepared the Decision Documentation and maps for the “North Soup Rethin” (OR120-TS09-03) timber sale. The units in this sale were analyzed as part of the “North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study” Environmental Assessment (EA OR 125-08-01). The analysis concluded in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed Density Management Study. This project was designed to implement Phase 2 of the Initial Thinning and the Riparian Buffer Study as part of the North Soup Density Management Study to demonstrate and evaluate different approaches to managing young forest stands on low elevation sites in western Oregon to produce and maintain late-successional characteristics. The Decision Documentation is posted on the District Internet site: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/index.php>.

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer, *A. Dennis Turowski* within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The World*, Coos Bay, Oregon.

Please direct requests for copies, questions, or comments to Coos Bay District BLM, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459-2000, ATTN: Rick Schultz; call 541-756-0100; FAX 541-751-4303, or email to OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov, ATTN: Rick Schultz.

Sincerely,

/s/ A. Dennis Turowski

A. Dennis Turowski
Umpqua Field Manager

United States Department of the Interior

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OR120-TS09-03

North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study

EA OR125-08-01

Decision Documentation

North Soup Rethin DM Timber Sale

Analyzed in

North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study Environmental Analysis

EA No. OR125-08-01

Background:

The Umpqua Resource Area, Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, using research objectives designed at Oregon State University and the Pacific Northwest Research Station have identified the Phase 2 treatments that would be implemented in the Density Management Studies (DMS) Project. The BLM has prepared the North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study Environmental Analysis (EA) which concluded with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated February 26, 2009. The entire study area is 233 acres, with 135 of these acres receiving a rethinning treatment in the North Soup Density Management Area located in the Mill Creek – Lower Umpqua River fifth field watershed.

The *North Soup Rethin DM* timber sale, composed of three units, as outlined in the table below, is part of this EA and is located in T. 23 S., R. 09 W., Sections 16, Willamette Meridian.

Proposed Action:

The *North Soup Rethin DM timber* sale would implement the next phase of the rethinning treatments to include high, moderate, and variable thinning densities in the Late-Successional and Riparian Management Area land use allocations according to prescriptions outlined in the BLM Density Management Study Plan.

Approximately 765 MBF of timber is scheduled for removal but will not contribute to the district ASQ as this volume is within LSMA and RMA land use allocations.

No new roads will be constructed in the *North Soup Rethin DM timber* sale.

The *North Soup Rethin DM timber* sale will create snags and coarse woody debris (CWD) as outlined in the table below.

The following tables summarize acres of forest treatment for the *North Soup Rethin DM timber sale*:

EA Treatment	Target density in conifers greater than 9 inches dbh	North Soup Rethin DM Unit #	Estimated acres*	Actual acres*	Trees left for future snags/CWD Per acre	Total conifers marked for retention
High Density	60 conifers/acre	2	54	54	5/2 conifers/acre	67 conifers/acre
Moderate Density	30 conifers/acre	1	34	37	5/2 conifers/acre	37 conifers/acre
Variable Density	60/30/20 conifers/acre	3	44	44	5/2 conifers/acre	67/37/27 conifers/acre
Totals			132	135		

*Does not include gaps, reserve patches, the 1 Site Tree width stream buffer, and the control.

The EA's Design Features are incorporated in the special provisions of the *North Soup Rethin DM timber sale*. The following is a brief summary of some of these Design Features.

Harvest Systems

- The sale area will be harvested with skyline utilizing previous yarding corridors where possible. Any additional trees marked for safety, or to facilitate logging operations would be offset by demarking an equal number of trees in each treatment area affected.

Road Decommissioning

- Following completion of harvest on the North Soup Rethin DM, the 23-9-15.3 road would be closed and decommissioned. The 23-9-16.3, -16.6, and -16.7 roads would be closed and fully decommissioned (including pulling in-stream culverts). Water barring, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching would be required as needed to reduce potential erosion and to help restore the natural hydrologic flow. Roads would also be blocked to prevent vehicle passage.

Prescription

- Desired residual green tree density:
 - 60 TPA** - High-density treatment (unit 2) and high-density subtreatment within the variable-density treatment (unit 3).
 - 30 TPA** - Moderate-density treatment (unit 1) and moderate-density subtreatment within the variable-density treatment (unit 3).
 - 20 TPA** - Low-density subtreatment within the variable-density treatment (unit 3).
- **Five additional conifer trees** per acre retained on all treatments to be used for future snag recruitment.

- **Two additional conifer trees** per acre to be used for down wood debris recruitment in those areas with below target levels of large decay class 1 and 2 down wood.
- In general, all hardwoods, coniferous species of very low occurrence on a site, and all trees less than 9 inches DBH would be reserved, except those trees that fall within road rights-of-way, landings, yarding corridors or need to be removed for safety reasons.

Public comments:

Scoping comments were received from the public and addressed in the EA. The North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study EA and FONSI were made available for public comment on March 4, 2009. The comment period closed on April 4, 2009.

Written comments were received from two members of the public. Comments that addressed specific design features and prescriptions contained in the proposed action or that raised concerns about the adequacy of the analysis were considered. Some of the comments received were not in agreement with the study design of the project and offered their own suggestion on prescription changes. Since it is important to keep the study design intact and consistent among all of the other DMS sites, the BLM was unable to make any changes to the prescription or study design. A written response to the commenters was mailed addressing concerns and seeking to clarify questions that were identified during the comment period.

Ongoing research projects are identified in the 2008 ROD-RMP which was approved following extensive public participation. Extensive review and comments occurred on both the draft and final EIS for that document in December 2008.

Compliance and Conformance:

The EA and existing FONSI fully cover this timber sale, constitute BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA, and conform to the applicable land use plan. As stated in the Notice of Sale for the *North Soup Rethin DM* timber sale, these documents are available for inspection at the Coos Bay District Office.

This EA is in conformance with the *Coos Bay District 2008 Western Oregon Plan Revision Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* [2008 ROD/RMP] (USDI-BLM 2008a), and specifically the 2008 ROD/RMP direction regarding ongoing research projects (USDI-BLM 2008a, p. 58). This EA is tiered to the *2008 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management* [2008 Final EIS] (USDI-BLM 2008b).

This EA is also tiered to and in conformance with the following documents: the *Management of Port-Orford-cedar in Southwest Oregon Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (USDA-FS/USDI-BLM 2004a) and its *Record of Decision* (USDI-BLM 2004); the *Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States* (USDI-BLM 2007a) and its *Record of Decision* (USDI-BLM 2007b) and the *Coos Bay Integrated Noxious Weed Program* (EA#OR-120-97-11 on file at the Coos Bay District Office).

There are no ESA listed fish species in the North Soup Density Management Area. Based on analysis by the Fisheries Biologist, we find that the proposed action will have no effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Therefore, consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not warranted. This conclusion further supports a finding of no significant impact.

Informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as provided in Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536 (a)(2) and (a)(4) as amended) is completed. The initial study treatment for the North Soup study area was determined to be a “not likely to adversely effect” on both spotted owl and murrelet and a Biological Opinion was issued on February 18, 1998 (Biological Opinion No. 1-7-98-F-079). A similar project adjacent to the North Soup Study Area was the 2004 Beaman Soup project. A Biological Assessment was prepared in 2004, which assessed potential impacts to all listed species and critical habitat within the fifth-field watershed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence (No. 1-15-05-I-0065) supporting that the much larger Beaman Soup project area and actions in the fifth-field watershed were “not likely to adversely affect” any listed species or critical habitat.

Analysis also concluded that implementation of the proposed actions would not contribute to the need to list any Special Status Species as identified in BLM Manual 6840 and BLM OR/WA 6840 policy. Botanical Special Status Species surveys have been completed on all units for which surveys are practical or those species included in the 2008 State Director’s Special Status Species List. These surveys did not identify any botanical Special Status Species in the *North Soup Rethin DM timber sale*.

The North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study is in compliance with the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Air Act. The project area does not contain any Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, designated Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers, or prime and unique farmlands. There were no concerns identified regarding Cultural Resource Values, Native American Religious Concerns, or Environmental Justice issues.

The North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study (EA #OR125-08-01) resulted in a FONSI, thus development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action Alternative as it applies to *North Soup Rethin DM timber sale* described in the EA OR125-08-01 for the North Soup and Blue Retro Density Management Study.

I am choosing to offer *North Soup Rethin DM timber sale* for the following reasons:

- It is consistent with the *2008 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* for the Bureau of Land Management Coos Bay District.
- It provides for the implementation of Phase 2 of the Density Management and Riparian Buffer Study designed to evaluate design criteria through which restoration could develop future forest habitat.

- The No Action alternative fails to address the purpose and need for action and does not meet the management objectives.

Administrative Remedies:

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations in 43 CFR 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer, *A. Dennis Turowski*, within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The World* newspaper on April 30, 2009, Coos Bay, OR.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states: “Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.” This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Coos Bay District office will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (c) states: “Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of decision or the notice of sale are not timely filed and shall not be considered.” Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to him/her. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision as permitted by regulations at 5003.3(f).

If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 pm) within 15 days after the publication of the decision notice, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the project decision will be considered in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available, and the Coos Bay district office will issue a protest decision.

For further information, contact Rick Schultz, at 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459 or (541) 756-0100.

/s/ A. Dennis Turowski

April 30, 2009

A. Dennis Turowski
Umpqua Field Manager

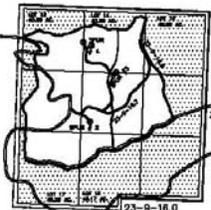
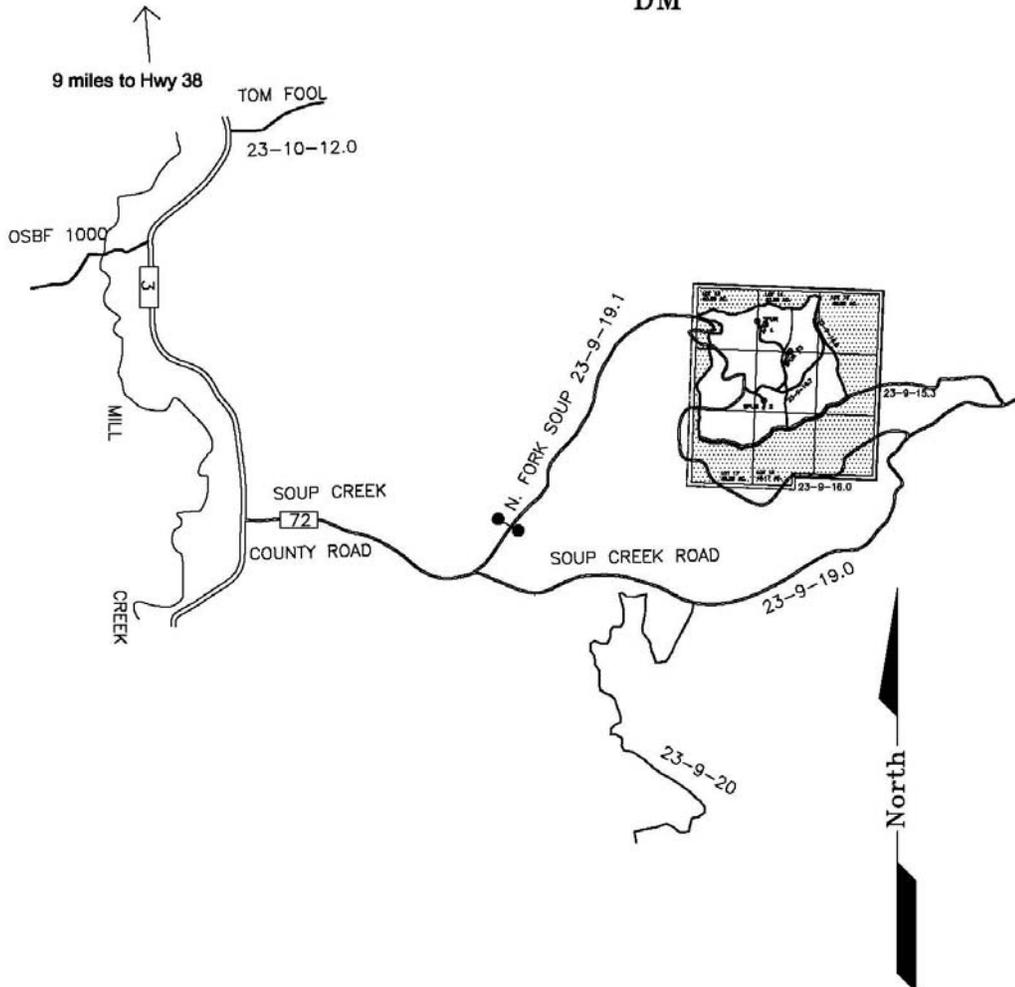
Date

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT

SALE NO. 09-03
 EXHIBIT A-1
 Page 1 of 1

T. 23 S., R. 9 W., Sec. 19 Will. Mer.

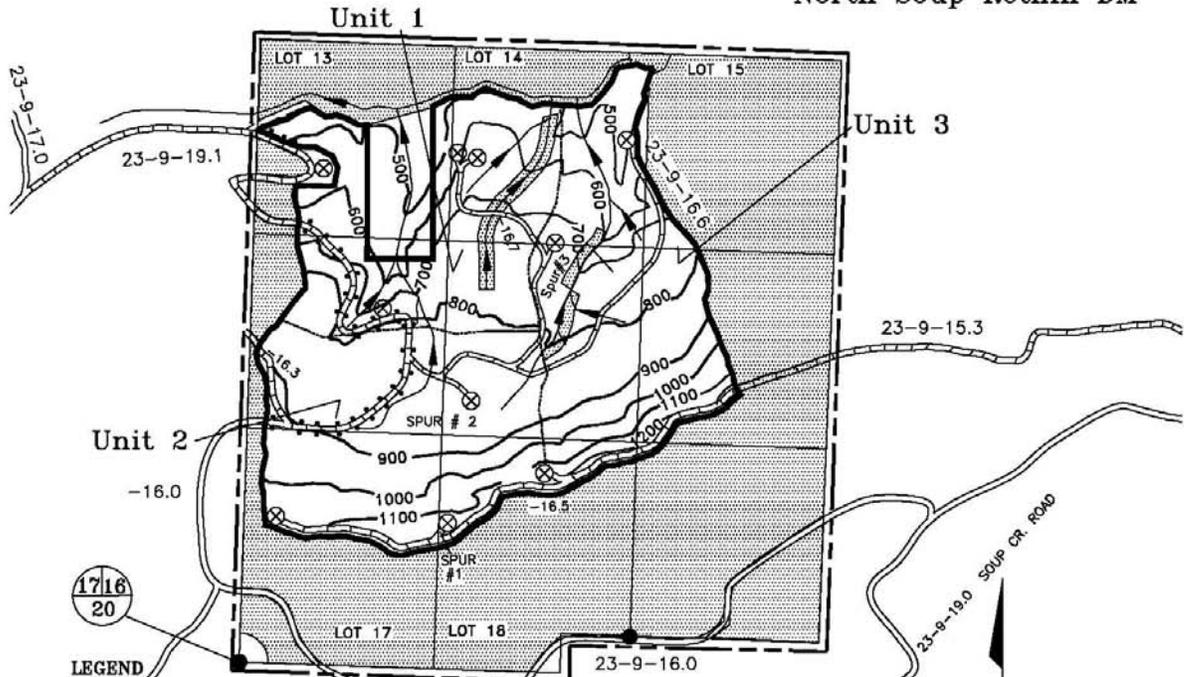
North Soup Rethin
 DM



LEGEND

SCALE 1" = 3000

COUNTY ROAD		CONTRACT AREA BOUNDARY	
ALL WEATHER ROCKED ROAD		GATE	
EXISTING ROAD		RESERVE AREA	



LEGEND

-  Reserve Area
-  Partial Cut Area
-  Boundary of Partial Cut Area, Blazed, Posted and Painted
-  Proposed Landing
-  Roadside Hazard Reduction Area, 1-side
-  Roadside Hazard Reduction Area, 2-sides
-  Road to be Constructed
-  Road to be Renovated
-  Road to be Improved
-  Existing Road
-  Stream Channel
-  Corner Found
-  Interior Boundary
-  Contract Boundary

SCALE 1" = 1000'

UNIT NO. 1	-----	42 AC.
Partial Cut	-----	37 AC.
Reserve Patches	--	5 AC.
UNIT NO. 2	-----	59 AC.
Partial Cut	-----	54 AC.
Reserve Patches	--	5 AC.
UNIT NO. 3	-----	49 AC.
Partial Cut	-----	44 AC.
Reserve Patches	--	5 AC.

TOTAL PARTIAL CUT	-----	135 AC.
TOTAL	-----	135 AC.
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TOTAL RESERVE PATCHES	--	15 AC.
RESERVE	-----	223 AC.
TOTAL RESERVE	-----	238 AC.
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TOTAL CONTRACT	-----	373 AC.