



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459

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In Reply Refer To:

5400/1792 (ORC040)

OR120-11-34

Sandy Quarry CT

DOI-BLM-OR-C040-2010-0001-EA

Weaver-Sitkum Environmental Assessment

Dear Concerned Citizen:

We have prepared the Decision Documentation for the Sandy Quarry CT Timber Sale, OR120-11-34. The Sandy Quarry CT Timber Sale is a portion of the Proposed Action of the Weaver-Sitkum Environmental Assessment (EA).

We have posted the Decision Documentation on the District Internet site:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/plans/index.php>.

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

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathy Hoffine

08/15/2011

Kathy Hoffine
Myrtlewood Field Manager

Date



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Weaver-Sitkum Environmental Assessment

DECISION DOCUMENTATION

For the

Sandy Quarry CT Timber Sale (OR120-11-34)

Weaver-Sitkum Environmental Assessment

Background:

The Myrtlewood Field Office, Coos Bay District, Bureau of Land Management, previously prepared an Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-OR-C040-2010-0001-EA Weaver-Sitkum) which contained analysis of the effects of conducting thinning within the Weaver-Sitkum project area as well as analysis of a No Action Alternative. This EA, which is hereby incorporated by reference, resulted in a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) signed September 17, 2010. The *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale is composed of units included in the Proposed Action of this EA and is located in T. 28 S., R. 10 W., Sections 23, and 27, Willamette Meridian.

The following table shows the EA Unit number and the corresponding Timber Sale Unit number for clarification. Table 1-1 also includes the EA estimated acreage and the Timber Sale final acreage. The EA had the *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale configured as an eight-unit sale encompassing 395 acres and yielding over 10 MMBf of timber. In the tenuous and unpredictable timber market today, the BLM decided that dividing the sale into two smaller sales along a logical geographic break would be more attractive to prospective bidders. The resulting two sales are *Sandy Quarry CT* and *Weavie Wonder CT*. Currently, the BLM has scheduled the sale of *Weavie Wonder CT* in January 2012. *Sandy Quarry CT* has approximately 5.8 MMBf of timber.

Table 1-1 Comparison of EA numbers and Timber Sale numbers for units and final acreage

						Totals
Weaver-Sitkum EA	Unit #	8	22	7	21	
	Acreage	60	55	57	46	218
Timber Sale	Unit #	1	2	3	4	
	Acreage	65	55	55	45	220

Proposed Action:

The *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale will implement commercial and density management thinning in the Matrix and Riparian Reserve land use allocations (LUAs). The *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale will require construction of 2.0 miles of new road and renovation/reconstruction of 3.75 miles of existing road. This

timber sale will include decommissioning of a total of 3.87 miles of newly constructed and renovated roads. The following table (Table 1-2) shows the comparison between the *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale and the EA estimates for road work.

Table 1-2 Comparison of total harvest acres and road work between the EA and the Timber Sale

	New Road Construction (Miles)	Road Renovation/ Reconstruction (Miles)	Road Decommissioning (Miles)	Full Road Decommissioning (Miles)
EA Estimate	1.5	4.34	1.6	1.7
Timber Sale	2.0	3.75	1.7	2.17

The 0.5-mile difference in new construction is primarily from three new spurs that total 0.42 miles. BLM road 28-10-23.5 and Spur 1A each add 0.14 miles of new construction (0.28 miles total). The BLM lengthened and added these roads to facilitate uphill yarding and eliminate the downhill yarding in the EA proposed action. These roads are located on broad ridges with slopes less than 30% and have no connection with the stream network. This new construction will require the removal of 1 acre of timber (76 trees) not specified in the EA. Additionally, the EA analysis considered 0.14 miles of BLM road 28-10-23.5 as existing road proposed for renovation while the timber sale exhibits show it as new construction. Aerial photos from 1950 clearly show that the area was salvage logged from this road following a wildfire. The engineers labeled this as new construction simply to reflect that the renovation work is heavier than normal. There are no additional impacts to timber, soils, or hydrological resources by labeling the work “new construction” rather than “renovation.” The final 0.08 miles difference is spread amongst all the other spurs and results from differences between GIS estimates and actual on the ground measurements.

The BLM no longer plans to use the 0.5 miles of the 28-10-27.2 road; therefore the difference in the road renovation/reconstruction values results from not renovating this road. There are no additional impacts from not using this road.

The BLM will thin stands to achieve the objectives for the Matrix and Riparian Reserve LUAs listed on page 4 of the EA. This includes increasing overstory variability, development of larger limbs and crowns, epicormic tree branch response, and patchily-distributed suppression mortality (EA p.27). Snag and down wood creation will occur (EA pp.12-13). Unit prescriptions include, (but are not limited to) Basal Area (BA) thinning, variable thinning, gap creation, skips, and dominant tree retention areas (EA pp.11-12).

The EA included a complete list of Project Design Features (pp.16-20) designed to avoid, minimize, or rectify impacts on resources and are included as part of the Proposed Action. These and additional descriptions of the Proposed Action are hereby incorporated by reference. The following is a brief summary of some of these Design Features:

- Stream channels will have no-harvest buffers.
- Harvest units will use a combination of skyline cable and ground-based equipment.
- Snags and/or down wood will be created where applicable.
- Cable yarding will be required with one-end or full log suspension.
- All road work activities will use applicable Best Management Practices as described in the RMP.

Compliance and Conformance

The BLM developed the Weaver-Sitkum EA under the management direction of the *1995 Coos Bay District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (1995 ROD/RMP). The analysis supporting this decision tiers to the *Final Coos Bay District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (USDI 1994). This 1995 *Record of Decision* is also supported by, and consistent with, the *1994 Final Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its associated *Record of Decision* (USDA/USDI 1994).

The Coos Bay District initiated planning and design for this project to conform with the Coos Bay District's 1995 RMP. Following the March 31, 2011 decision by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in *Douglas Timber Operators et al. v. Salazar*, which vacated and remanded the administrative withdrawal of the Coos Bay District's 2008 ROD and RMP, I evaluated this project for consistency with both the 1995 RMP and the 2008 ROD and RMP. Based upon this review, I have determined that the selected alternative is consistent with the Coos Bay District's 1995 RMP and 2008 ROD and RMP. Although the selected alternative contains some design features not mentioned specifically in the 2008 ROD and RMP, these design features are consistent with the 2008 ROD and RMP.

On December 17, 2009, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington issued an order in *Conservation Northwest, et al. v. Sherman, et al.*, No. 08-1067-JCC (W.D. Wash.), granting Plaintiff's motion for partial summary judgment and finding NEPA violations in the *Final Supplement to the 2004 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines* (USDA and USDI, June 2007). In response, parties entered into settlement negotiations in April 2010 and the Court filed approval of the resulting Settlement Agreement on July 6, 2011. Projects that are within the range of the northern spotted owl are subject to the survey and manage standards and guidelines in the 2001 ROD, as modified by the 2011 Settlement Agreement.

The Weaver-Sitkum EA was developed incorporating the 2006 Pechman Exemptions. Per the 2011 Settlement Agreement, these exemptions remain in force. The *Sandy Quarry CT* project meets Exemption A because it consists of thinning in stands less than 80 years of age (EA p.23; Table III/IV-4). The BLM determined the stand age based on data collected from stand exams. Therefore, I have reviewed the NEPA document for the *Sandy Quarry CT* Timber Sale and have determined it is consistent with the Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan as amended by the 2001 *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigations Measures and Standards and Guidelines* (2001 ROD), as modified by the 2011 Settlement Agreement.

The BLM requested formal and informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in August 2010 for evaluation of effects to the Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with the District's effects determination and stated that the Proposed Action "would not jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl or the murrelet."¹

Consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not required, as this portion of the Proposed Action (*Sandy Quarry CT*) has been determined to have "no effect" to threatened Oregon Coast coho salmon. Additionally, project activities would not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat under the Magnuson-Steven Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1855(b)).

¹ October 6, 2010. Biological Opinion on the Weaver-Sitkum Commercial and Density Management Thinning Harvest Project (FWS 13420-2010-F-0166)

Analysis has also concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action will not increase the likelihood of or the need for listing of any Special Status Species under the ESA as identified in BLM Manual 6840 and BLM OR/WA 6840 Policy. Botany Special Status Species surveys are complete on all units for species in which surveys are practical and are included in the 2008 State Director's Special Status Species List.

This project complies with the Coastal Zone Management Act and I have determined that there would be no adverse effects to Coastal Zone resources from implementing this project. There would be no effects to water quality (EA pp. 37-43) and the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives would be restored or maintained (EA pp. 55-63).

The Weaver-Sitkum EA complies with the Clean Water Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Air Act. This project area does not contain any designated Wilderness, Wild & Scenic Rivers, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, or prime or unique farmlands. There were no concerns identified regarding Cultural Resource Values, Native American Religious Concerns, or Environmental Justice issues. The Weaver-Sitkum EA (DOI-BLM-OR-C040-2010-0001-EA) resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), thus development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

Public Involvement

The BLM informed the general public of the availability of the EA and preliminary FONSI for review through a direct notification (August 8, 2010) to those on the Field Office's mailing list, which included adjacent landowners, the web update group, and others who requested notice of this type of project. BLM also posted an announcement on the District's Internet site,

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/plans/index.php>. The EA and preliminary FONSI were available for review until September 9, 2010. The BLM received two comments from four organizations.

Upon reviewing the external and internal comments, the BLM made a few notable changes to the EA to provide additional information, refine the proposed action, and further clarify project design features. These did not constitute substantive changes and additional effects analysis is not needed. The following is a summary of these changes:

1. New Roads – *“New roads require linear clearcuts up to 60 or 70 feet cutting width.”*
Response – The following Project Design Feature was added on page 18 of the EA – Right-of-way clearing limits including the road bed would be approximately 35 feet in width.
2. Road Decommissioning – *“The BLM's definition of ‘decommission’ is simply to waterbar, not even to block.”*
Response – Yes, these roads would be blocked. The EA has been clarified on pages 15 and 19 that decommissioned roads would be blocked and by what methods could be utilized.
3. NRF Habitat – *“The EA does not even assure us that the thinning will maintain a canopy above 60% in units that contain NRF habitat.”*
Response – The EA has rectified this omission and a discussion was added on page 33. Final cover will be above 60%.
4. Forest Structure – *“The EA failed to give a clear definition of ‘Maturation forest structural stage’..... failed to tell us which five units were being described.”*
Response – An additional Table (new Table III/IV-3) was added clarifying this terminology and the units have been identified on page 23.

5. C/D blocks – “*The EA failed to disclose how much of the C/D Block in the project area is in late-successional forests.*”
Response – This omission has been rectified in the EA on page 24.
6. POC – “*Why then is the BLM going to remove all POC within 50’ of roads? ... known as sanitizing roads?*”
Response – Roadside sanitation is not proposed. This has been clarified on page 9 of the EA. The BLM would use Spacing Objectives for POC thinning to remove POC within 50’ of roads only within the units and not along designated haul routes.
7. Easement – Internal review found the BLM omitted including, the proposal to pursue obtaining an easement from adjoining landowners for 5 roads included in this analysis. This discussion has been included on page 14.

On October 27, 2010, I issued a decision to implement *Sample Tree Falling for the Bob N Weave and Sandy Quarry Timber Sales*. Multiple environmental organizations appealed the sample tree falling decision to the Interior Board of Land Appeals who dismissed the appeal on July 25, 2011. However, to meet the BLM’s scheduled timber commitment, I am offering the *Sandy Quarry CT Timber Sale* without conducting sample tree falling.

Rationale for the Decision

Using the Decision Factors for this project (EA p. 4); I am choosing to offer the *Sandy Quarry CT Timber Sale* for the following reasons:

- Implementation of the Proposed Alternative best meets the Purpose and Need described in the Weaver-Sitkum EA (pp.3 and 4); the No Action Alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need.
- It will enhance stand structure and habitat complexity for late-successional forest-dependent species, and create additional habitat components through snag and down wood creation.
- It is consistent with both the *1995 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* and the *2008 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* for the Coos Bay District of the Bureau of Land Management.
- It provides collateral economic benefits to the local community.
- It complies with other major applicable laws, regulations, and Bureau policies.

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 at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer *Kathy Hoffine* within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The World*, Coos Bay, Or.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states: “Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and would 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 to 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 publication of the decision notice, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the project decision will be reconsidered 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 Aimee Hoefs, Team Lead, at 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459 or (541) 756-0100.

Decision Approved by

/s/Kathy Hoffine

08/15/2011

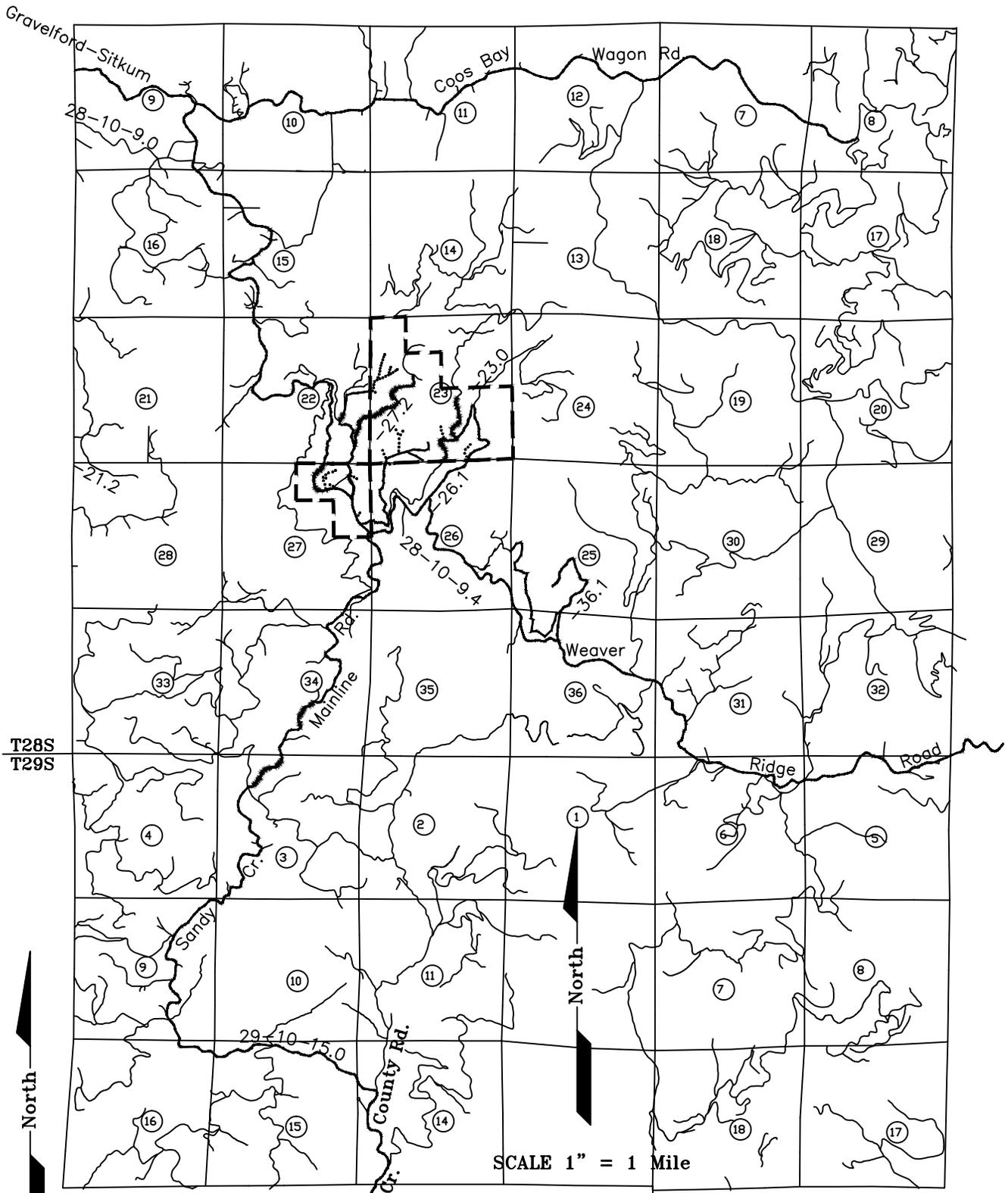
Kathy Hoffine
Myrtlewood Field Manager

Date

Enclosure: Timber Sale Prospectus Map (Exhibit A, and A-1; 3 pages)

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT
 T. 28 S., R. 10 W., Secs. 23 & 27, Will. Mer.

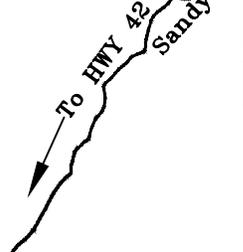
SALE NO. 11-34
 EXHIBIT A-1
 Page 1 of 1
 SANDY QUARRY CT



SCALE 1" = 1 Mile

-  Existing Road
-  Road to be Constructed
-  Boundary of Contract Area

SCALE 1" = 1 Mile

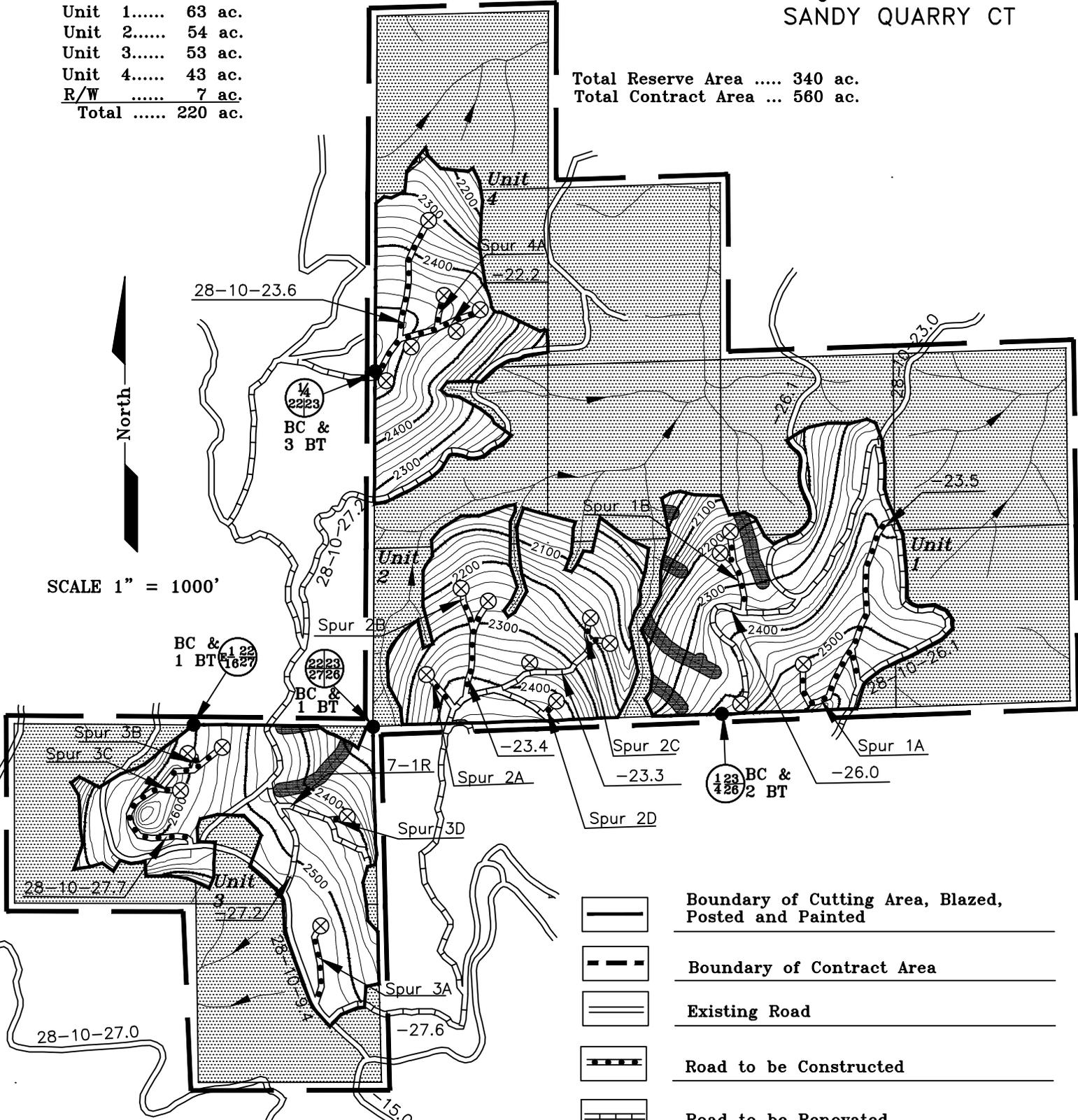


TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT
 T. 28 S., R.10 W., Secs. 23 & 27, Will. Mer.

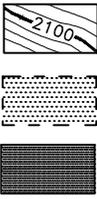
SALE NO. 11-34
 EXHIBIT A
 Page 1 of 2
 SANDY QUARRY CT

Unit 1.....	63 ac.
Unit 2.....	54 ac.
Unit 3.....	53 ac.
Unit 4.....	43 ac.
R/W	7 ac.
Total	220 ac.

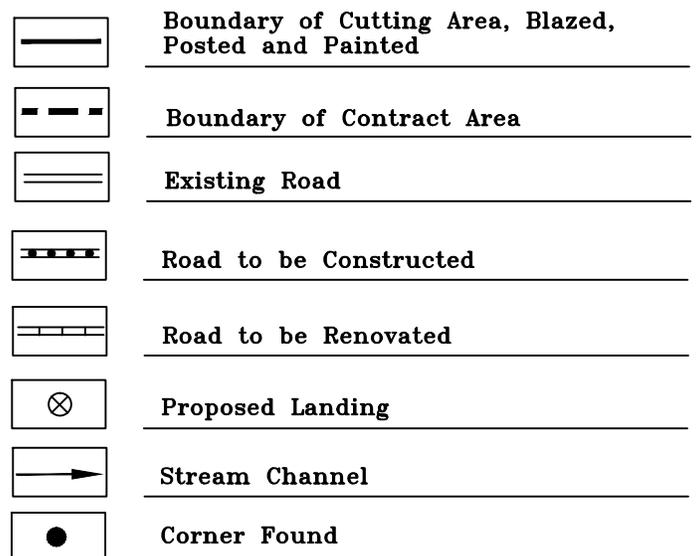
Total Reserve Area 340 ac.
 Total Contract Area ... 560 ac.



SCALE 1" = 1000'



Partial Cut Unit
 Reserve Area
 No Harvest Area



Boundary of Cutting Area, Blazed, Posted and Painted
 Boundary of Contract Area
 Existing Road
 Road to be Constructed
 Road to be Renovated
 Proposed Landing
 Stream Channel
 Corner Found

TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP
 USDI-BLM COOS BAY DISTRICT
 T. 28 S., R.10 W., Secs. 23 & 27, Will. Mer.

SALE NO. 11-34
 EXHIBIT A
 Page 2 OF 2
 SANDY QUARRY CT

