

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

A. Background

Project Name: Eugene District Sample Tree Falling, August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009

Date: July 2, 2008

Categorical Exclusion Number: OR090-08-23

Location:

The general project area is the Eugene District Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Individual units where sample tree felling may occur are as described:

Legal Description (Township – Range – Section)	Land Use Allocation*	Resource Area
T. 14 S., R.1 E., Sec. 35	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 14 S., R.2 W., Sec. 34 & 35	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 15 S., R.1 W., Sec. 7 & 19	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 15 S., R.2 W., Sec. 13 & 24	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 15 S., R.6 W., Sec. 7, 17, 18, & 19	GFMA	Siuslaw
T. 15 S., R.7 W., Sec. 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, & 24	GFMA	Siuslaw
T. 16 S., R.1 E., Sec. 33	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 16 S., R.1 E., Sec. 35	BEHA	Upper Willamette
T. 18 S., R.1 E., Sec. 24 & 25	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 19 S., R.1 E., Sec. 2, 11, & 13	GFMA	Upper Willamette
T. 19 S., R.5 W., Sec. 33	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 19 S., R.6 W., Sec. 15, 19, & 21	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 19 S., R.7 W., Sec. 13, 23, 25, 27, & 35	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 20 S., R.4 W., Sec. 3	GFMA	Siuslaw
T. 20 S., R.5 W., Sec. 33 & 7	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 20 S., R.6½ W., Sec. 1	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 20 S., R.7 W., Sec. 1, 5, 11, 14, & 15	LSR	Siuslaw
T. 21 S., R.2 W., Sec. 27	Connectivity	Upper Willamette
T. 22 S., R.3 W., Sec. 9 & 13	Connectivity	Upper Willamette
T. 22 S., R.4 W., Sec. 13	Connectivity	Upper Willamette
T. 23 S., R.3 W., Sec. 13 & 15	Connectivity	Upper Willamette

* GFMA: General Forest Management Area

BEHA: Bald Eagle Habitat Area

LSR: Late Successional Reserve

Treatment may occur within Riparian Reserves associated with GFMA and Connectivity land use allocations.

Description of Proposed Action:

The Eugene District BLM proposes to fell, buck, and scale sample trees (“sample tree felling”) to ensure accuracy of timber cruises for harvest.

- Trees would only be felled within proposed sale units in the locations shown in the table in Section A.
- Trees would be selected at random from the trees that are eligible for harvest in the sale area.
- The trees would be bucked to standard, merchantable lengths for the direct measurement of volume and the evaluation of the condition and value of the timber.

Sample tree felling would be one of the last activities completed during timber sale preparation, and would occur as part of the timber cruising process.

Project Design Features:

Falling of sample trees within 0.25 miles of unsurveyed suitable habitat for marbled murrelets and/or spotted owls would require incorporation of all applicable design standards and/or terms and conditions of the applicable biological assessment. For actions within Zone 1 and Zone 2 of marbled murrelet habitat, habitat altering activities (including disturbance) within 100 yards of unsurveyed suitable or potential habitat and implemented between April 1 and September 15 shall not begin until two hours after sunrise and shall end two hours before sunset.

B. Plan Conformance Review:

The proposed action is in conformance with the Eugene District Resource Management Plan (RMP, 1995), as amended and is consistent with the RMP decision to provide a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products (ROD/RMP p3).

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, *C. Forestry, (6) – shall meet the following requirements: (a) Shall be limited to an average of one tree per acre or less; (b) Shall be limited to gas-powered chainsaws or hand tools; (c) Shall not involve any road or trail construction; (d) Shall not include the use of ground based equipment or other manner of timber yarding, and (e) Shall be limited to the Coos Bay, Eugene, Medford, Roseburg, and Salem districts and Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area in Oregon.*

This categorical exclusion is appropriate to this situation because the proposed action will be limited to an average of one tree per acre or less; will be limited to gas-powered chainsaws or hand tools; will not involve any road or trail construction; will not include the use of ground based equipment; and will occur within the Eugene District. The categorical exclusion is also appropriate because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment, as documented in the following table. The proposed action is reviewed below, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

D. Categorical Exclusions – Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: All proposed activities follow established Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety. The proposed sample tree felling is in remote, forested locations outside of population centers.		

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
<p>2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.</p>		X
<p>Rationale: Trees to be felled are only within the proposed timber sale units. These units are, by design, outside of unique areas such as those discussed above. No tree felling will occur in parks, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; or wetlands. Felling an average of one or fewer sample trees per acre itself would not change the overall habitat function of the stand or remove habitat at the species level; as such, the proposed action sample tree felling itself would not have significant impacts on migratory birds.</p>		
<p>3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].</p>		X
<p>Rationale: There are no predicted environmental effects from the proposed action which are considered to be highly controversial nor are there unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses.</p>		
<p>4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.</p>		X
<p>Rationale: There are no predicted effects from the proposed action that are highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique, or unknown risks.</p>		
<p>5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.</p>		X
<p>Rationale: Sample tree felling has taken place throughout the State of Oregon and the Eugene District for years. There is no evidence that this action, improving the accuracy of timber cruises, has potentially significant environmental effects. Sample tree felling is a discrete action completed as part of timber sale preparation – it does not commit the BLM to pursuing further actions, and as such would not establish a precedent or decision for future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.</p>		
<p>6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.</p>		X
<p>Rationale: Sample tree felling has been conducted in the past and this activity had no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect. Sample tree felling is a cruising tool used to improve the timber sale process, but this action is not integral to the timber sale process. Trees are felled and measured in sample tree felling, but the action doesn't necessarily entail removal of the felled trees. Removal of trees generally occurs in conjunction with a timber sale decision which has its own NEPA analysis. The District timber sale program was analyzed in the RMP's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and individual sales are further analyzed in site-specific NEPA analysis (environmental assessments, or EAs) tied to the RMP EIS, which historically result in findings of no significant impact (FONSIs).</p>		

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:		YES	NO
7.	Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
	Rationale: No properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places are located within the units of the proposed action.		
8.	Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, as an Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
	Rationale: Implementation of the Project Design Features would minimize disturbance effects to individuals. Some proposed thinning units are within critical habitat for northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet; however, felling an average of one or fewer sample trees per acre would not change the overall habitat function of the stand or result in the loss of critical habitat. There would be no adverse effects to the species or their critical habitat from this action.		
9.	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
	Rationale: The proposed action conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands in the Eugene District ROD/RMP, which complies with all applicable Federal, State, local and tribal laws.		
10.	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 2898).		X
	Rationale: The felling of individual trees would not affect low income or minority populations – the activity is dispersed across District-administered land which is largely interspersed with private, industrial forest land. Furthermore, this action ensures that the public, including low income and minority populations, receive a fair price for the public resources (timber) being sold.		
11.	Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
	Rationale: In the Upper Willamette Resource Area, cultural resource inventories would be conducted prior to implementing the proposed action. If cultural resources are found within a unit through pre-disturbance inventories or during activities, appropriate measures would be applied. The units within the Siuslaw Resource Area are located within the Oregon Coast Range Physiographic Province, and the terms of Protocol D as defined in the National Programmatic Agreement in Oregon (USDI,1998) apply.		

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X
Rationale: The proposed action does not result in measurable changes to the current baseline of the risk, or actual introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species in or from the project area. Existing and likely continuing activities including, but not limited to, motor vehicle traffic, recreation use, rural and urban development, road construction, timber harvest, and natural processes can contribute to the introduction, existence, and spread of noxious weeds/invasive species. Vehicles accessing the project area for the proposed action would stay on existing roads (no additional roads proposed), reducing the potential of picking up and dispersing noxious weeds or seed. The proposed action does not introduce any vector for spread or introduction beyond such vectors already found.		

E. Review

I have considered the preceding rationale and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts by sample tree felling.

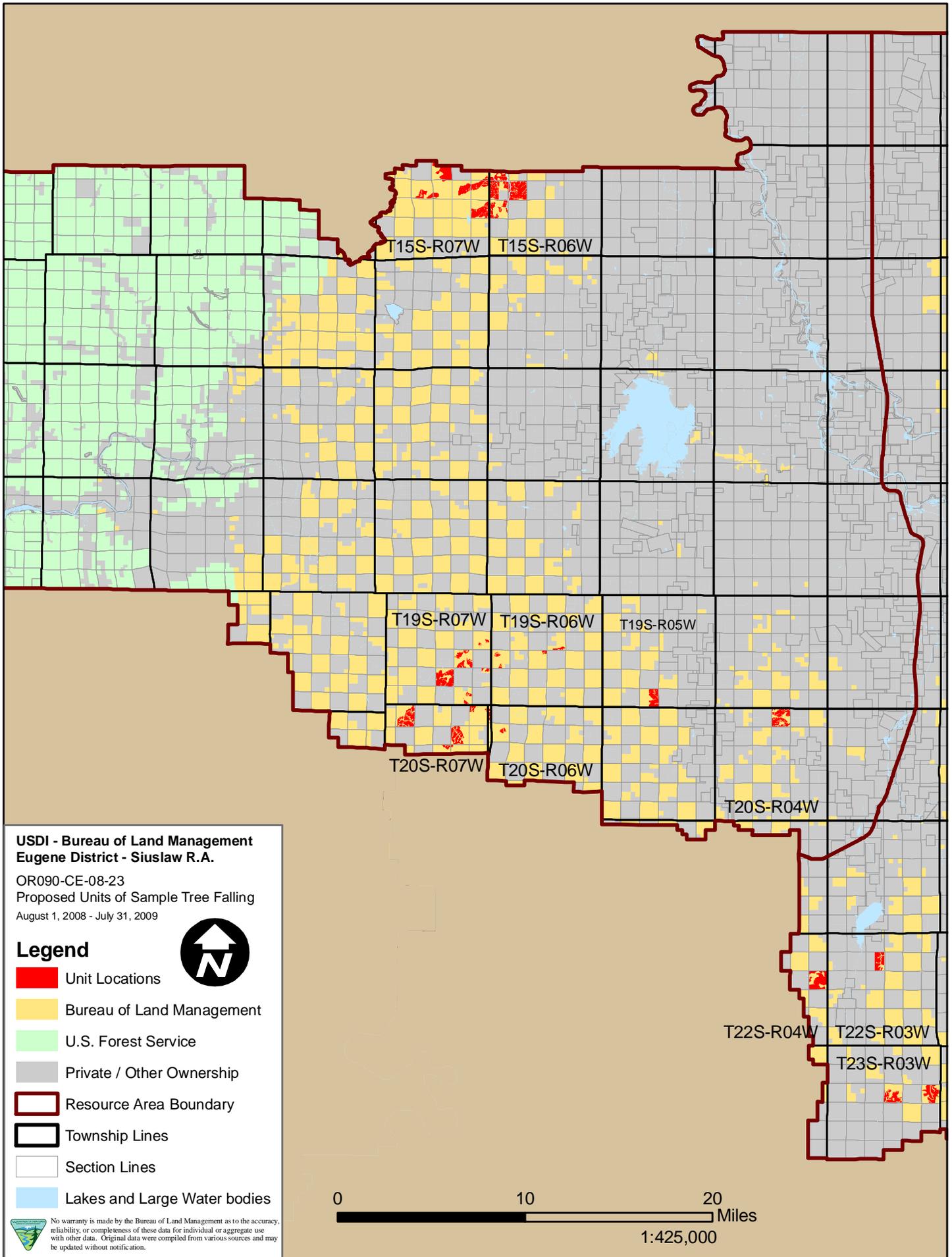
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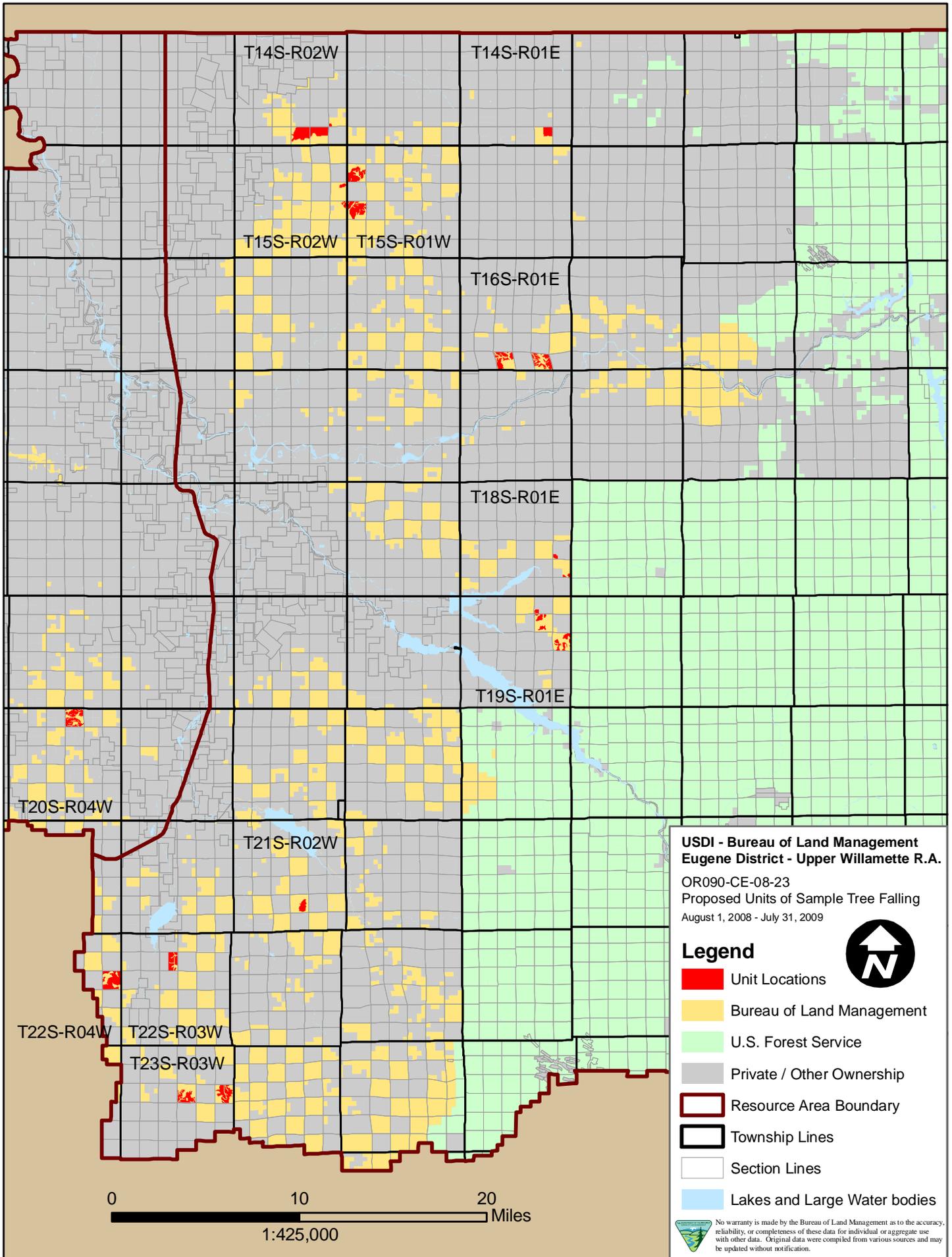
/s/ Polly Shannon
Authorized Official

7/15/08
Date

F. Contact Person and Reviewers:

For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact: Larry Larson, District Cruiser/Appraiser (541) 683-6291.





**USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Eugene District - Upper Willamette R.A.**

OR090-CE-08-23
Proposed Units of Sample Tree Falling
August 1, 2008 - July 31, 2009

Legend



- Unit Locations
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- Private / Other Ownership
- Resource Area Boundary
- Township Lines
- Section Lines
- Lakes and Large Water bodies

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

