

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE  
DECISION RECORD and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**Bottomline Density Management Study  
Environmental Assessment OR090-08-02**

**BACKGROUND**

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-08-02) which analyzed the effects of forest management activities on 191 acres within a 450 acre area located in the southwest portion of the Siuslaw Resource Area. The EA considered three alternatives to treat all the acres. The EA and Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for a 30-day public review on November 28, 2007. One comment was received.

The EA identified alternative A as the Proposed Action. However since the time the EA was made available for public review, coho salmon have been re-listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Alternative B specifically provides haul restrictions on a seasonal basis to protect coho salmon and their designated critical habitat. Hereinafter, the Proposed Action shall refer to Alternative B.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR090-EA-08-02), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl," (April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (June 1995); (2) the Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA or as articulated in the letters of comment.

**Context**

The Proposed Action would occur in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) and Riparian Reserve Land Use Allocations (LUA) as designated by the Eugene District Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP anticipated that timber harvest would occur in the GFMA LUA, and that silvicultural treatment, such as density management thinning, would occur in Riparian Reserves to help achieve the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Eugene District RMP.

Under the Proposed Action, timber harvest would occur on approximately 191 acres of approximately 70 year old timber in a 450 acre planning area. Forests in the planning area are primarily second growth Douglas-fir. Almost all of the project area was subjected to clearcut harvest about 70 years ago. No actions would take place within timber stands older than 80 years of age. Further, timber harvest in the near term does not establish a firm commitment to harvest these stands again in the future.

## Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the Bottomline Density Management Study decision relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the CEQ. With regard to each:

1. **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.** The EA considered both potential beneficial and adverse effects. None of the effects are beyond the range of effects analyzed in the Eugene District "Final Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement" (November 1994), to which the EA is tiered.
2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.** No aspect of the Proposed Action would have an effect on public health and safety.
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There are no known historic or cultural resource sites that would be affected by the Proposed Action. Past pre-project cultural resource surveys conducted in conjunction with surface-disturbing actions in the Coast Range physiographic province have not resulted in the discovery of significant cultural properties. The Oregon BLM and the Oregon Historic Preservation Office developed a protocol agreement recognizing the paucity of discoverable historic properties in the Coast Range. Under this protocol, pre-project cultural resource surveys are not needed in the Coast Range. There are no parks, wetlands, prime farmlands, or wild and scenic rivers in the planning area.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects of actions planned under the Proposed Action are similar to many other thinning projects implemented within the scope of the Northwest Forest Plan and Eugene RMP. No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Action.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The analysis has not shown that there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment not previously considered and analyzed in EISs to which this decision is tiered. Commercial thinning treatments have been pursued and accomplished for many years in the vegetation types typical of the Bottomline planning area.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The Proposed Action is consistent with actions appropriate for the GFMA and Riparian Reserve land use allocations, as designated by the Eugene RMP. Commercial thinning in GFMA and density management reduction in Riparian Reserves are expected activities in these LUAs.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The environmental analysis did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the EISs which accompanied the Northwest Forest Plan and Eugene RMP.
8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect 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 historic resources.** There are no features within the planning area that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Public comment and tribal consultation did not reveal any significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources in the planning area.
9. **The degree to which the action 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.** The Bottomline Density Management Project does not occur within Designated Critical Habitat for endangered or threatened wildlife species. The Sandy Creek owl site occurs in the project area however the stand is presently serving as dispersal habitat. Surveys for Marbled Murrelets revealed no detections. The project area does contain designated critical habitat for coho salmon. Seasonal restrictions for timber haul and upgrades to roads will ensure no adverse impacts to coho salmon or its designated critical habitat.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** The Proposed Action does not threaten to violate any law. The Proposed Action is in compliance with the Eugene RMP, which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands.

## **DECISION**

It is my decision to select Alternative B as described in the Bottomline Density Management Study Environmental Assessment. The EA and the FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts. Implementation of this decision will result in forest management activities, including thinning of GFMA and Riparian Reserve by commercial timber harvest, down wood creation, road construction, renovation, and decommissioning. All design features identified in the EA will be implemented. The Density Management Study research objectives would continue to be attained.

The selected alternative is in conformance with the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan," (RMP, June 1995), as amended.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

In addition to the selected alternative, the EA considered two other alternatives. Alternative C is the "No Action" alternative and would carry out no management activities at this time. Alternative A would have no seasonal restrictions for haul in the project area and would also support the Density Management Study research objectives.

## **RATIONALE FOR SELECTION**

The purpose of the action is to provide a research site for the Density Management Study which will contribute to the scientific knowledge needed to implement the NSO ROD. In addition the site will provide a sustainable supply of timber while maintaining forest health and productivity, and would contribute to the attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives. Both the action alternatives meet the purpose for taking action.

The selected alternative would most effectively meet the purpose of the action. The proposed road improvements would be similar to Alternative A in order to mitigate the increase in traffic rates, particularly in areas with direct sediment delivery potential. Log haul would occur only during dry conditions in areas with direct sediment delivery potential which would reduce some of the sedimentation risks associated with winter haul. Long term, post haul, sediment delivery from this haul route is expected to be lower than alternative C (no action) and similar to alternative A due to improved road surfacing and added relief drains and a return to existing traffic use.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **Public Scoping and Review**

The Bottomline Density Management Research Study was announced in the June and October 2007 planning publication for the district (Eye to the Future). This publication is mailed out to 142 interested groups, businesses, local government agencies and individuals.

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the Bottomline EA was released for a 30-day public review and was sent to local groups, businesses, state or local government agencies, and individuals. One comment letter was received for which a reply was prepared. A copy of the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact will be mailed to the commenter.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, informal consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which concurred that the action "may affect, and is not likely to adversely affect" northern spotted owls due to thinning activities within owl home ranges, (US Fish and Wildlife Service Letter of Concurrence, October 2006) and would have no effect on marbled murrelets.

### **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)**

As of the signing of this Decision, coho salmon were listed as a "threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act. In accordance with current policy, BLM is expected to confer with NOAA Fisheries on actions that may affect coho salmon. The Bottomline Density Management Research Study has been determined to have "No Effect" to coho salmon and their designated critical habitat.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) requires Federal agencies to consult with the Secretary of Commerce regarding any action or proposed action authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) under the Act. The alternatives, as described and analyzed in this environmental assessment would have "No Effect" on waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.

**Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians**

The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians were notified of this project during the scoping process, requesting information regarding tribal issues or concerns relative to the project. No response was received.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

A timber sale contract will implement the forest management activities for the proposed action of the Density Management Research Study.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES**

This forest management decision may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 – Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of forest management decision is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of this project (43 CFR 5003.2b). Protests of the decision must be filed with this office within 15 days after first publication of the notice of decision. As interpreted by BLM, the regulations do not authorize acceptance of protests in any form other than a signed, paper document that is delivered to the physical address of the BLM office. Therefore, email or facsimile protests will not be accepted. If no protest is received by the close of business (4:15 pm) on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, this decision will be reconsidered in light of the protest and other pertinent information available in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3.

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/s/ William Hatton  
Field Manager  
Siuslaw Resource Area

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7/22/2008  
Date