

**RECORD OF PLAN CONFORMANCE AND
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX) DOCUMENTATION for
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS NOT ESTABLISHED BY STATUTE
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

BLM Office: Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Proposed Action Title/Type: **Buck 15 Plantation Thinning**

NEPA Log #: DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2015-06-CX

Project Location: W.M., Township 38 South, Range 5 East, Section 15

A. Background

Description of Proposed Action:

The BLM is proposing precommercial thinning in approximately 67 acres of plantations. Thinning will be done using mechanical equipment and cut material will be yarded and ground for biomass. All material cut will be eight inch diameter at breast height (DBH) or less. The proposed project is expected to improve forest health as well as growth and vigor of residual trees. The plantations are approximately 30 years old with trees averaging 4 - 6 inches DBH.

Purpose and Need for the Project:

The purpose of the proposed action is to

- Reduce hazardous fuel loading through tree density reduction and removal of the material.
- Increase fire suppression effectiveness by increasing crown spacing.
- Thin young overstocked plantations to increase growth and resiliency of remaining trees.
- Utilize small diameter material from existing plantations to provide forest products to the local economy.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan (LUP) Name: Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan

Date Approved/Amended: June 1995

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): “Precommercial thinning and release treatments would be designed to control stand density, influence species dominance, maintain stand vigor and place stands on developmental paths so that desired stand characteristics result in the future” (KFRA RMP page E-6).

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 2, Appendix 1, 11.9. C.7 as follows: *Harvesting live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction. Such activities:*

- a. Shall not include even-aged regeneration harvests or vegetation type conversions.*
- b. May include incidental removal of trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing.*
- c. May include temporary roads which are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the BLM*

transportation system and not necessary for long-term resource management. Temporary roads shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources; and

d. Shall require the treatment of temporary roads constructed or used so as to permit the reestablishment by artificial or natural means, or vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover was disturbed by the construction or use of the road, as necessary to minimize erosion from the disturbed area. Such treatment shall be designed to reestablish vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Removing individual trees for sawlogs, specialty products, or fuelwood.
- b. Commercial thinning of overstocked stands to achieve the desired stocking level to increase health and vigor.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply. The following documentation describes whether or not the extraordinary circumstances apply to the project:

CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation		
Will the proposed categorical exclusion action:	YES	NO
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: Operations will follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards designed to prevent job-related illness or injuries.		
2.2 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.		X
Rationale: The project area was reviewed on the ground and resource specialists were consulted. No unique features are present. This treatment area is located outside the unique geographic areas listed above. There are no parks, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild and scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; or other ecologically significant or critical areas within the project area. Cultural resource surveys were previously conducted within the proposed action areas in accordance with the National Cultural Programmatic Agreement and Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Lands Administered by the BLM in Oregon. Cultural resource sites identified within project areas of potential effects (APE) will be protected with specific Project Design Features. There will be no significant impacts to prehistoric or historic cultural resources.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
Rationale: The 67 acres chosen for harvest in this CX excludes Riparian Reserves and Late Successional Reserves (LSRs). The project includes only Matrix lands. Three of the five thinning units are within NSO designated critical habitat but the units are classified as non-habitat for the NSO. A portion of one unit is also on the outer edge of the Burton Butte NSO home range but again the treatment unit is classified as non-habitat. A "No Effect" determination has been made for all ESA listed species and designated critical habitat.		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
Rationale: The KFRA BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists reviewed the project and determined there is no threat of significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The KFRA regularly thins plantations similar to these and the environmental effects would not exceed those analyzed in the RMP. Similar treatments in this area were analyzed and the effects discussed in the Spencer Creek EA (2008) (OR-014-08-09) and the Upper Spencer Creek EA(2003) (OR-014-03-03).		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with		X

potentially significant environmental effects.		
Rationale: This action does not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Each project contains its own set of conditions that must be evaluated on its own merit, as the BLM has done with this project. Land use allocations and environmental conditions, such as remaining vegetation, slopes, soils, and streams, are unique to each project and must be considered with each treatment proposed.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: No direct relationships to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects were identified by resource specialists. Reasonably foreseeable future actions were determined to have cumulatively insignificant environmental effects.		
2.7 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: The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is determined to be the area of the project. A record search was performed and previous survey coverage was determined to be adequate. No National Register Listed sites, or sites eligible for listing, were identified in the APE. The undertaking is determined to result in No Historic Properties Affected. Therefore, there will be no significant impacts to properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.		
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
Rationale: Three of the five thinning units are within NSO designated critical habitat but the units are classified as non-habitat for the NSO. A portion of one unit is also on the outer edge of the Burton Butte NSO home range but again the treatment unit is classified as non-habitat. A "No Effect" determination has been made for all ESA listed and proposed species and designated critical habitat.		
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Rationale: The BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed the project for compliance with applicable laws such as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Air Act, National Historic Preservation Act and Archaeological Resources Protection Act, among others. The resource specialists found the project conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands in the Klamath Falls RMP, which complies with all applicable Federal and State laws.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
Rationale: Based on past projects in the Klamath Falls Resource Area, the project would provide job opportunities in local communities. The project does not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect to low income or minority populations.		
2.11 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: BLM archaeologists have determined that the project will not 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.		
2.12 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 nonnative invasive species in or from the project area. The implementation of project design features (PDFs) such as washing equipment prior to entry to the project area will reduce the risk of introduction or spread of noxious weeds.		

The proposed action would not meet any of the above extraordinary circumstances, or fail to comply with Executive Order 13212 (Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects) – to avoid direct or indirect adverse impact on energy development, production, supply, and/or distribution, or impact RMP exclusion and avoidance areas.

Surveys and Consultation

Surveys and/or consultation are not needed for special status plants and animals, for cultural resources, and other resources as necessary (appropriate fields are Initialed and Dated by responsible resource specialist):

Surveys	Are Completed	Will Be Completed	Are Not Needed
SS* Animals			SGH 05/07/2015
SS* Plants			SGH 05/07/2015
Cultural Resources			LN 5/6/2015
Consultation	Is Completed	Will Be Completed	Is Not Needed
SS* Animal Consultation			SGH 05/07/2015
Botanical Consultation			SGH 05/07/2015
Cultural Consultation			LN 5/6/2015
*(SS = Special Status)			

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact: Madeline Campbell, Klamath Falls Resource Area, 2795 Anderson Avenue, Building 25, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603-7891 or telephone: 541-883-6916

Determination for Buck 15 Plantation Thinning DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2015-06-CX

I have determined that it is appropriate to proceed with the Proposed Action as described and shown on the attached map(s) in the Buck 15 Plantation Thinning categorical exclusion.

Rationale

The proposed action has been reviewed by the Klamath Falls Resource Area staff and appropriate Project Design Features, as specified, will be incorporated into the proposal. The proposed action would not create adverse environmental effects, meet any of the above extraordinary circumstances, or fail to comply with Executive Order 13212 (Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects) – to avoid direct or indirect adverse impact on energy development, production, supply, and/or distribution.

Based on the attached NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Categorical Exclusion Review, I have determined the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

Authorizing Official: /s/ Donald J. Holmstrom Date: 7/6/2015
(Signature)

Name: Donald J. Holmstrom
Title: Field Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Appendix A – Project Design Features (PDFs)

Weeds

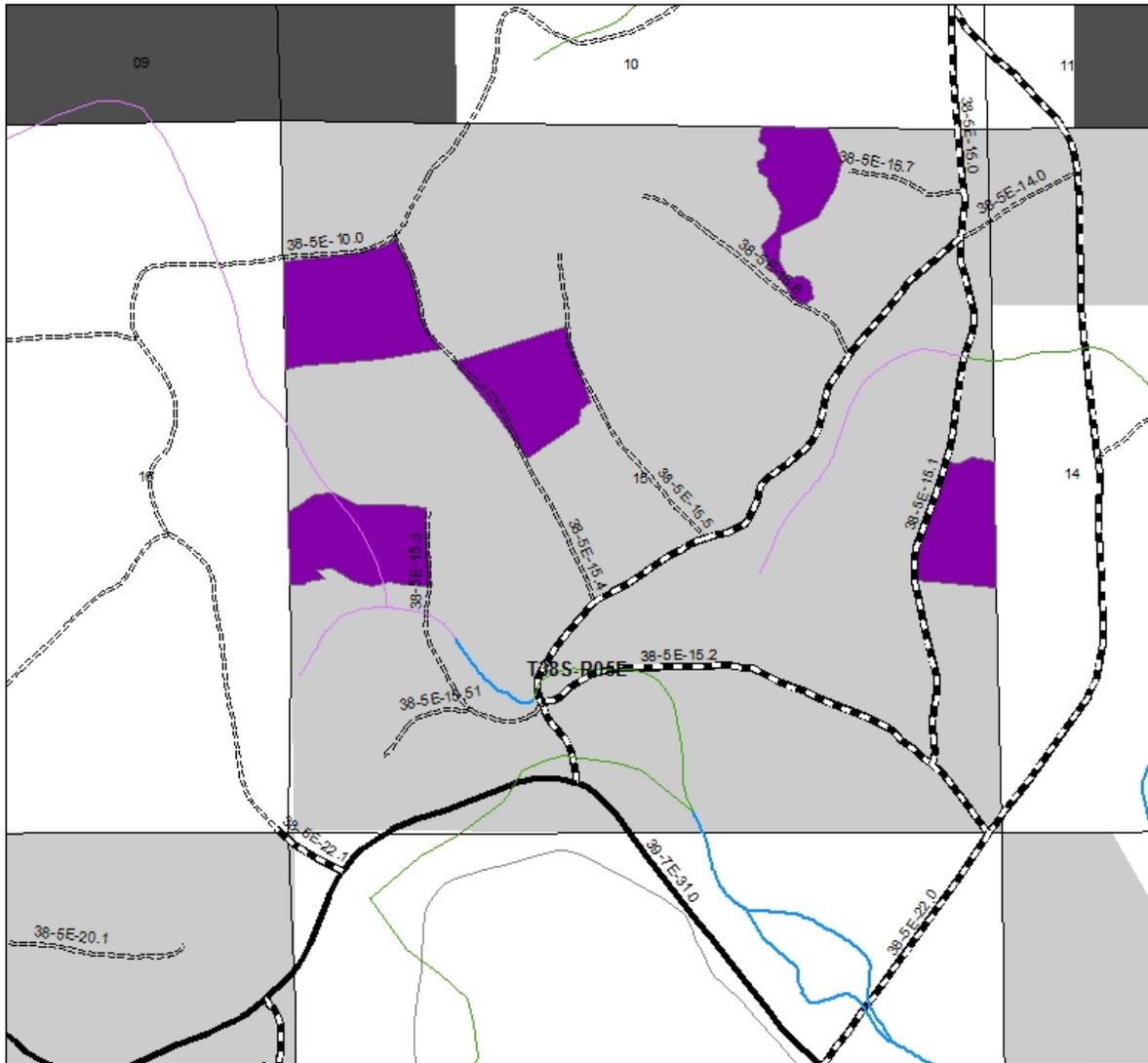
All vehicles and equipment will be cleaned prior to operating on BLM lands. Removal of all dirt, grease, and plant parts that may carry noxious weed seeds or vegetative parts is required and may be accomplished with a pressure hose.

High concentrations of noxious weeds in the immediate area of mechanical operations shall be mowed to ground level prior to the start of project activities.

All equipment and vehicles operating off of main roads shall be cleaned off prior to leaving the job site when the job site includes noxious weed populations. Removal of all dirt, grease, and plant parts that may carry noxious weed seeds or vegetative parts is required and may be accomplished with a pressure hose.

Soils/Water Quality

- Limit detrimental soil conditions to less than 20 percent of the total acreage within the activity area. Use current soil quality indicators to monitor soil impacts.
- Retain and establish adequate vegetative cover in accordance with RMP BMPs to reduce erosion.
- Retain enough small woody (dead and down) material to sustain soil nutrients. See RMP BMPs for specifications. In ponderosa pine forest land, nine tons per acre of duff and litter (approximately ½ inch deep).
- Limit mechanical operations to soil moistures below 20 percent at a six inch depth.



Legend

Buck15_plantations

Roads

- Bituminous/Paved
- Aggregate / Hard Surface / Pit Run
- Natural Improved / Grid Rolled
- Natural Unimproved
- Not Known

- KFRA Township Range Lines
- KFRA Section Lines

Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- Private Lands
- U.S. Forest Service

Streams

- Perennial
- Intermittent
- No Special Management

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