

Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record For Blowdown Road Salvage OR115-08-12

Location of Proposed Action

Project is located on BLM system roads in Townships 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 South, Range 1, 2, and 3 East, Willamette Meridian, Jackson County, Oregon. Only trees lying fully or partially within the road prism will be removed and hazard trees leaning toward the road that could fall onto the road will be felled and removed.

Description of Proposed Action

A recent storm having hurricane force winds with catastrophic disturbances to the local area has blocked roads accessing private property, private industrial forest lands, and BLM-administered lands. A swath of forest approximately 24 miles long and 8 miles wide was severely impacted when strong winds blew down trees, blocking forest roads. The BLM proposes to remove trees blocking system roads, as well as hazardous trees leaning toward the road that could fall onto the road. This action would provide private land owners with access to their land, allow the BLM to access Federal lands for resource management and fire protection, and provide the public with safe passage on these roads.

Project Design Features

1. Slash will be lopped and scattered, as determined by the sale administrator.
2. Road use will be discontinued during periods of wet weather.
3. Large coarse woody debris of 120 linear feet (16" X 16') per acre will be left on-site.
4. Purchaser will be required to meet current state fire regulations.
5. Decommissioned roads and roads with existing earth barricades will not be salvaged unless access is necessary for other management needs.
6. Only trees lying fully or partially within the road prism will be removed.
7. Hazardous trees leaning toward the road that could fall onto the road will be felled and removed.
8. Remove only the portion of the tree within the road prism in Riparian Reserves and Spotted Owl Cores.
9. Snow will be plowed when necessary to access the project area.
10. Road surfaces, ditches, and culvert catch basins will be cleaned of slash and debris.
11. Equipment, tools, and gear will be cleaned of dirt, mud, and plant parts before entering BLM-managed lands.
12. Motorized equipment will not leave the road prism.
13. Seasonal restrictions for Threatened and Endangered and Special Status Species will apply.

Plan Conformance Review

The Bureau of Land Management did not scope this proposal and the public was not involved in its development. This proposal is consistent with policy directed by the following:

- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan FSEIS, 1994 and ROD, 1994)
- *Final-Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision* (PRMP/EIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995)
- *Record of Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from the Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (ROD, 2007)
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998)* and tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (EIS, 1985)

The proposed action is in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990 (as amended), and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

This proposal is consistent with management direction in the Medford District Resource Management Plan that directs the BLM to “Provide for salvage harvest of timber killed or damaged by events such as wildfire, windstorms, insects, or disease, consistent with management objectives for other resources.” “Provide for the safety of forest users (including removing hazard trees along roads and trails, in camp grounds, and administrative sites, etc.)” (USDI 1995, p. 72).

Categorical Exclusion Determination

This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as provided in United States Department of the Interior Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9 I(1). This section allows “Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition as a result of the event. Such activities shall be limited to: repair and installation of essential erosion control structures; replacement of repair of existing culverts, roads, trails, fences, and minor facilities; construction of protection fences; planting, seeding, and mulching; and removal of hazard trees, rocks, soil, and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails, campgrounds, and watercourses. These activities:

- (a) Shall be completed within one year following the event;
- (b) Shall not include the use of herbicides or pesticides;
- (c) Shall not include the construction of new roads or other new permanent infrastructure;
- (d) Shall not exceed 4,200 acres; and
- (e) 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
- (f) 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.”

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following table. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Reviewer: Jean A. Williams Date: March 5, 2008

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

Proposed Action:

To implement the removal and use of hazardous trees and blowdown timber, as described in the Proposed Action.

Department of the Interior Manual 516 2.3.A(3) provides for a review of the following criteria for categorical exclusion to determine if exceptions apply to the proposed action based on actions which may:

1. *Have significant impacts on public health or safety.*
 Yes No
 Initial JW Remarks:

2. *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; 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.*
 Yes No
 Initial JW Remarks:

3. *Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].*
 Yes No
 Initial JW Remarks:

4. *Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.*
 Yes No
 Initial JW Remarks:

5. *Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.*
 Yes No
 Initial JW Remarks:

6. *Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.*
 Yes No
 Initial SLS Remarks:

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.*
 Yes No
 Initial JEM Remarks:

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.*
 Plants Yes No Initial mw Remarks:
 Animals Yes No Initial Lt Remarks:
 Fish Yes No Initial SK Remarks: *all on Roads*

9. *Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.*
 Yes No
 Initial JEM Remarks:

10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Yes No

Initial JK Remarks:

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).

Yes No

Initial JCM Remarks:

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative 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).

Yes No

Initial mw Remarks:

Special Consideration

During the design of this Proposed Action, I gave special consideration to the potential for significant impacts to threatened and endangered or bureau sensitive species of fish, wildlife and plants; cultural resources; noxious weeds; and soil/hydrologic resources. Where appropriate, surveys have been completed for these resources and buffer areas have been established where deemed necessary. The project design features included in this document will further protect these resources from the potential for significant impacts resulting from implementation of the Proposed Action.

Decision

It is my decision to harvest blown down trees lying fully or partially within the road prism and hazard trees leaning toward the road that could fall onto the road as described in the proposed action.

Decision Rationale

The proposed action has been reviewed by Butte Falls Resource Area staff and appropriate Project Design Features, as specified above, will be incorporated into the proposal. Based on the 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.

Signature of Authorizing Official



Christopher J. McAlear
Field Manager
Butte Falls Resource Area

March 5, 2008

Date

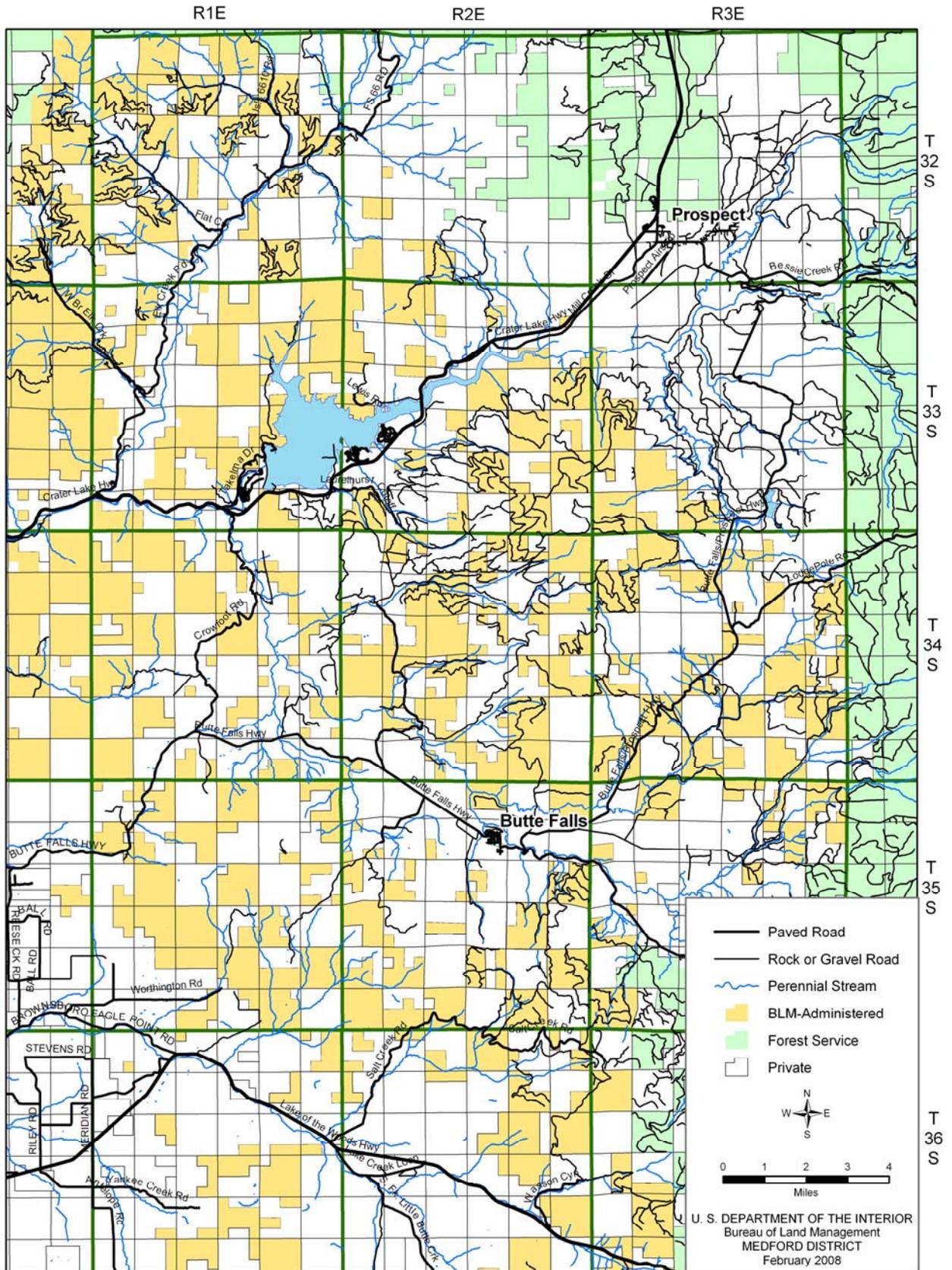
Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact: David Orban, Project Leader, at (541)944-0112.

Administrative Remedy

The forest management decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion is subject to protest under 43 CFR subpart 5003. Under 43 CFR 5003.2 subsection (a), a notice of decision will be published in local newspaper(s). Under 43 CFR 5003.3 subsection (a), protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of timber sale advertisement. Under 43 CFR 5003.3 (b), protest filed with the authorized officer shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision. A decision on this protest would be subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, although, under 43 CFR 5003.1 subsection (a), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of a decision governing or relating to forest management under 43 CFR 5003.2 or 5003.3.

Blowdown Road Salvage



Reviewers:

Name	Title	Date	Initials
Jean Williams	NEPA Coordinator	3/5/08	JW
Marcia Wineteer	Botanist	3/4/08	mw
Linda Hale	Wildlife Biologist	3/3/08	LH
Steve Liebhardt	Fisheries Biologist	3/4/08	SL
Shawn Simpson	Hydrology	3/3/08	SS
Ken VanEtten	Soil	3/3/08	KV
Leanne Mruzik	Fire/Fuels Specialist	3/3/08	LM
John McNeel	Cultural Resources	3/29/08	JM
Randy Bryan	Engineering	3/3/08	RRB
Trish Lindaman	Visual Resources/Recreation	3/3/08	TL