Finding of No Additional Significant Impact for Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage EA #OR115-08-02

Introduction

The Medford District Bureau of Land Management, Butte Falls Resource Area (BLM) recently completed the *Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Environmental Assessment* (EA) for salvage activities proposed in the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project. Based on the context and intensity of the impacts analyzed in the EA (p. 34-141), I have determined that Alternative 3 (the selected alternative), with the associated project design features, is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area.

The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will not have any significant effects beyond those described in the broader analyses conducted and disclosed in the environmental impact statements for the Medford District Resource Management Plan and the Northwest Forest Plan, or the effects have been determined to be insignificant. Environmental effects do not meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

In making this finding, I considered the following criteria, suggested by the Council on Environmental Quality, for evaluating the intensity or severity of the impacts of the activities proposed in the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project.

Context

The *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP) addresses the need for a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products that will help maintain the stability of local and regional economies, and contribute valuable resources to the national economy on a predictable and long-term basis. It also responds to the need for a healthy forest and rangeland ecosystem with habitat that will contribute toward and support populations of native species, particularly those associated with late-successional and old-growth forests.

Within the Medford District, 190,000 acres of BLM-administered lands designated as matrix make up approximately 22 percent of the total land base. Within the Butte Falls Resource Area, approximately 42,800 acres of the BLM-administered lands, or 21 percent the Butte Falls Resource Area, are matrix lands. The Medford District ROD/RMP identified matrix lands as "federal land outside of reserves and special management areas that will be available for timber harvest at varying levels" (ROD/RMP p. 107). These lands are expected to provide a sustainable supply of timber to help support local economies and communities.

The four 5th field watersheds containing the Project Area, Big Butte Creek, Rogue River/Lost Creek, South Fork Rogue River, and Little Butte Creek, include 103,575 acres of BLM-administered lands. The selected alternative (Alternative 3) is a site-specific action treating 6,010

acres of BLM-administered lands (5,910 acres matrix, 70 acres riparian reserve, and 30 acres northern spotted owl activity center), or about 6 percent of the BLM-administered lands within these watersheds. This project is within matrix (including connectivity block), key watershed, late-successional reserve (known northern spotted owl activity center), deer and elk winter range, and riparian reserve land use allocations.

Chapter 3 of the EA (p. 26-141) details the effects of the selected alternative. None of the effects identified, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and all anticipated effects are of the type and within the magnitude of effects analyzed and described in the *Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (1994).

Intensity

I have considered the intensity of the impacts anticipated from the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project relative to the intensity or severity of impacts described in 40 CFR § 1508.27(b).

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The *Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project Environmental Assessment* documented the site-specific analysis of effects to the environment. Required project design features are an integral part of the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project, ensuring that the potential for adverse effects on resources are minimized to the extent possible.

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, no significant adverse or beneficial effects will result from implementing the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project. All effects are of the type and within the magnitude of effects described in the *Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*.

The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will protect **soils and site productivity** by implementing the following project design features (EA p. 82-85):

- using existing and predesignated skid trails,
- ripping or subsoiling,
- walking machinery over logging slash,
- restricting operations to dry soil periods,
- restricting heavy equipment to slopes less than 35 percent,
- grass seeding and mulching, and
- water barring.

The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will not increase **peak stream flows** for the following reasons (EA p. 109):

- the project will not change the current crown closure;
- the project will not provide connectivity to stream channels from tractor yarding;
- road densities and the percent of area in roads will essentially remain the same; and

- road renovation will occur before roads are used for salvage activities. During road renovation, rock surfacing will reduce the likelihood of runoff concentrating on the road surface; road drainage improvements will further disperse road runoff and decrease the rapid concentrated routing of water to streams during storm events; and culvert upgrades will reduce the likelihood of streams being routed down roads during high flows.

The salvage project will have no direct or indirect effects on **stream temperature** because the use of no salvage buffers will maintain shade on perennial streams during salvage treatments and proposed road work (EA p. 108).

The salvage project will have minimal effects on **sedimentation** because (EA p. 108)

- roads will be constructed in stable locations to minimize the risk of road failure due to mass wasting;
- adding rock to the existing base, ditch relief culverts, and armored water dips will decrease sediment delivery;
- replacing existing stream crossing culverts with larger diameter culverts will reduce the potential for road failure at stream crossings;
- sediment control project design features governing instream culvert removals will reduce the amount of sediment reaching downstream water sources to the maximum extent practicable;
- total road miles in riparian reserves would remain the same, which would not change sediment sources over the long-term;
- the potential for sediment from salvage units to reach stream channels is very low due to the use of project design features and riparian reserves; and
- landings would be constructed outside riparian reserves and project design features would greatly limit any sediment moving off-site.

The salvage project will not affect **fish** because (EA p. 118-119)

- any sediment moving off roads will be an inconsequential amount and will be assimilated into background conditions;
- all road renovation will occur during the dry season;
- most streams are intermittent, therefore most sediment transport would occur during the winter flows in small amounts, rather than large pulses of sediment. Small pulses would occur during larger rain events when ditchlines contain enough water to transport the available sediment; and
- road renovation would improve road runoff and minimize road-related sediment.

Because of these factors, if sediment were to reach area streams it would be a discountable amount. The BLM consulted with NOAA-Fisheries on the effects of the salvage project and received a Letter of Concurrence that the project was not likely to adversely affect Southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon and their designated critical habitat.

The salvage project will reduce, but not eliminate, the potential for **epidemic insect populations**. The reduced amount of breeding habitat is expected to correspond to the reduction of insects and the potential for green tree mortality in areas salvaged prior to beetle emergence (EA p. 43).

The salvage project will reduce the **fuels** created by the windstorm and reduce the potential for increased fire behavior and the resulting damage by lopping and scattering, hand piling and burning, machine piling and burning, and underburning (EA p. 67).

The salvage project will not modify the current **northern spotted owl habitat**. The windstorm made the changes to spotted owl habitat and salvage will maintain the current post-storm function. Spotted owls will continue to use available post-windstorm nesting, roosting, and foraging, and dispersal habitat after implementation of the proposed action in the same manner as they did before because (EA p. 132-133, 138)

- windthrown trees in northern spotted owl activity centers will only be removed in areas that no longer provide suitable spotted owl habitat;
- canopy cover will be maintained at 60 percent or greater in the remaining nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat;
- canopy cover will be maintained at 40 percent or greater in the remaining dispersal habitat;
- decadent woody material, such as large snags and down wood, will remain after treatment and all multi-canopy, uneven-aged tree structure that was present pretreatment will remain post-treatment; and
- no nest trees will be removed.

The BLM consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for salvage activities occurring in nesting, roosting, and foraging and dispersal habitat. BLM obtained a Letter of Concurrence from the US Fish and Wildlife Service that the salvage activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect northern spotted owl.

The salvage project will have no known effects on **Threatened and Endangered and Special Status botanical species** because (EA p.139)

- no populations of T&E plant species occur in areas that would be impacted by salvage operations;
- documented sensitive vascular plant, lichen, or bryophyte sites will be protected;
- landscape level strategic surveys, suitable habitat in late-successional reserves, and protection of known sites throughout the Northwest Forest Plan area is expected to prevent Sensitive fungi from trending toward listing as a result of the proposed salvage activities; and
- the magnitude and scale of the salvage harvest is small enough that Sensitive fungi would not trend toward listing.

The salvage project will minimize or avoid the potential for new introductions, or the spread of existing, **noxious weed populations** because (EA p. 181)

- known noxious weed populations will be treated in salvage units and areas proposed for landing and road construction;
- vehicles and equipment will be pressure washed before entering BLM lands;
- noxious weed populations in rock quarries where gravel will be removed for road work will be treated;
- areas disturbed during project implementation will be seeded or planted with native plant materials;

- disturbed areas will be mulched with weed-free straw or hay; and
- landings and decommissioned roads will be monitored for 1 to 3 years after salvage is complete and noxious weeds will be treated as detected.

The salvage project will provide for recovery of salvage material on all available matrix stands where blowdown trees exist and on approximately 100 acres of severely damaged stands within riparian reserves (70 acres) and northern spotted owl activity centers (30 acres) in the Project Area (salvage material recovered from riparian reserves and northern spotted owl activity centers is not included in the calculation for the Allowable Sale Quantity). Approximately 36.5 million board feet would be harvested. Direct employment as a result of timber harvest and processing a commodity would result in approximately 330 full-time equivalent jobs. The estimated return to the Federal Treasury for timber harvest would be $175.00 per thousand board feet for a total value of approximately $6.4 million. All salvage available within the Medford District's ROD/RMP guidelines for matrix would be recovered except those areas the BLM determines are not commercially feasible to harvest due to the low volume per acre and high logging cost. These areas are generally isolated areas requiring helicopter yarding or extensive road building.

2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

The EA did not identify any aspects of the project as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health or safety. Public health and safety will be impacted in the following ways:

- Trees identified as hazards to workers or the public will be felled.
- Salvage of the blown down trees by professional loggers will meet Occupational Safety and Health Association regulations for worker and public safety.
- Reducing the increased fuel loads created by the blowdown will modify severe fire behavior in blowdown areas with the potential to produce large, intense fires. As stated in the EA (p. 58), "These areas of modified fire behavior provide fire suppression resources opportunities to safely initiate fire control efforts. Firefighters would have anchor points and areas with less intense burning characteristics to work from. This allows for a better chance to safely reduce the risk of large fires to the town of Butte Falls and other neighboring communities within the Wildland Urban Interface, Ginger Springs Municipal Watershed, road infrastructure, and critical resource areas."
- Prescribed burning operations will follow all requirements of the Oregon Smoke Management Plan and the Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality and Visibility Protection Program. By following these requirements, the project will have negligible effects on air quality within the Project Area.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project was designed to have no affect on historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas (EA p. 23-25). Where required, the BLM completed surveys and inventories to identify areas with unique characteristics. This allowed the BLM to design the project in such a way to avoid impacts to those areas.

- The BLM completed a cultural survey for the Project Area and the project archaeologist assessed the project as "No Effect Determination, No Resources."
- The EA analyzed salvage in up to 600 acres of matrix lands occurring in spotted owl critical habitat unit (CHU) OR-36. Salvage on approximately 40 acres of nonhabitat within CHU OR-36 will have "no effect" on the function of critical habitat because the windstorm changed the spotted owl habitat to nonhabitat. All proposed salvage actions in spotted owl nesting, roosting, foraging and dispersal habitat in the CHU "may affect, not likely adversely affect" critical habitat for the northern spotted owl. Salvaging down trees will not alter nesting, roosting, and foraging (275 acres) and dispersal habitat (290 acres) because the canopy will not be changed. Salvage activities (removal of windthrown, sprung, snap top severely damaged trees and some hazard trees) are designed to ensure nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat will retain at least 60 percent canopy cover. Salvage in dispersal habitat will retain at least 40 percent canopy. Large trees, snags, large down wood, and structural diversity important to northern spotted owls will be maintained. No new road construction would occur in nesting, roosting, or foraging habitat (EA p. 132). Salvage in the CHU will treat but maintain the current function (post-storm) of the forest as owl habitat.
- The EA analyzed up to 1.3 miles of permanent road construction in the Ginger Springs Municipal Watershed. The road will provide for long-term management within the Ginger Springs Municipal Watershed. The following design features will be implemented to avoid impacts to the watershed: roads will be constructed on and near ridgetops in a stable location; the road will be located away from intermittent or perennial stream channels to minimize the likelihood of sediment reaching streams; one culvert will be installed at a dry draw stream crossing; and the permanent road will not cross any headwalls or unstable areas so the risk for road failure is low (EA p. 104).
- The South Fork/North Fork Little Butte Creek Tier 1 key watershed is composed of three 6th field watersheds. The project overlays the Lower North Fork Little Butte Creek 6th field, a portion of the key watershed (EA p. 87). Management direction in the ROD/RMP for key watersheds include preparing watershed analysis prior to resource management, reducing existing system and nonsystem road mileage, and if funding is not available, then no net increase of roads in key watersheds (EA p. 89). The *Little Butte Creek Watershed Analysis* was completed in 1997. This project will not increase road mileage and no salvage will occur in riparian reserves within the Tier 1 Key Watershed.
- NOAA Fisheries Service designated Southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon critical habitat (CCH) in the salvage Project Area (EA p. 113). **No salvage and no new permanent or temporary road construction is proposed in CCH.** Only a few miles of roads proposed for renovation and log hauling are within close proximity to CCH. The BLM inventoried the ditchlines near CCH and the majority of the roads near CCH are on flat surfaces where material is more difficult to transport. Any sediment moving off roads would be an inconsequential amount and would likely be assimilated into background conditions. Road renovation will occur during the dry season and will improve road runoff and minimize road-related sediment (EA p. 118-119). The following project design features specific to CCH will also be implemented: no salvage within CCH riparian reserves, harden natural-surface road approaches where they cross streams containing CCH by applying base coarse material at stream crossings, and install drain dips, where feasible, to intercept water run-off from road surfaces and divert away from stream courses. In addition, all tractor yarding, soil

ripping, and excavator piling operations will be restricted from October 15 to May 15. All rock hauling, log hauling, and landing operations on adequately rocked roads will be restricted during periods when soil moisture conditions or rain events when operations could result in road damage or the transport of sediment to nearby stream channels, especially between the dates of October 15 and May 15 (EA p. 19).

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Public comments received indicated differences of opinion regarding whether or not to salvage blown down timber in the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project Area. While differences in public opinion regarding managed versus unmanaged forests reflect a range of values that humans place on public lands and its management, they do not indicate the presence of highly controversial environmental effects. "Highly controversial," in the context of 40 CFR § 1508.27(b)(4), refers to substantial disagreement within the scientific community about the environmental effects of a proposed action. It does not refer to expressions of opposition or expressions of preference among alternatives.

The effects of the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project are similar in nature to those of other commercial timber sales, including timber salvage projects that have been implemented within the scope of the Medford District Resource Management Plan. The anticipated effects of salvaging blown down timber and post-salvage fuels reduction, documented in the EA, are well supported with referenced literature throughout the EA.

Literature was submitted by some commentors for consideration in assessing the environmental effects of salvaging. However, BLM specialists determined the studies submitted were not applicable to the Butte Falls Salvage project for one or more of the following reasons:

1) the level of disturbance events (absence of wildfire) is different and the environmental and vegetative conditions of the two areas are significantly different, thus not comparable (EA p. 37),
2) the study prematurely ended after two seasons (standard study length is 4 to 5 years) after a wildfire consumed all of the salvaged-logged plots and four of the control plots (EA p. 37-38),
3) this study was conducted on an ecological area (elevation range from 8,000 to 9,000 feet) so very different from those found on BLM-administered forest lands in southern Oregon (elevation ranges from 2,000 to 5,000 feet), that it would be impractical to compare these results with those in this Project. Soil depth, development, texture, organic matter, parent material, temperature, moisture supplying capacity, decomposition rates, and biota vary substantially between the study site and the soils found within the Project Area that the data cannot be effectively correlated to aid in the quantification of the anticipated effects (EA p. 80), and
4) the study did not apply to this type of activity.

Similarly, some studies submitted by commentors for consideration were specific to post-fire salvage logging. The Donato et al. study directly addresses post-fire salvage logging and the reference pulled from page 9 of the Noss study also addresses post-fire logging. However, the

disturbance factor in the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project Area was not fire, it was wind. Unlike a fire, where the fuel loadings are reduced after the disturbance, the fuel loadings after the windstorm are considerably higher than they were prior to the event. Therefore, the Project Area surface fuel loading conditions are not comparable to fuel loadings after a fire. Because the conditions are not comparable, you cannot extrapolate the findings of these studies to this project. The anticipated effects of salvaging blown down timber and post-salvage fuels reduction are documented and well-supported with referenced literature throughout the EA (p. 46-75).

In response to the Xerces Society Report which summarizes studies concerning the influence of logging on the control of insects. The report concludes with five insect management guidelines. In the paragraphs below, each guideline is compared to the proposed action of this EA. The proposed action is consistent with the report guidelines.

1. *Maintain and restore high-quality late-successional and old growth forest conditions. Diverse, old forests contain and array of natural predators and pathogens, and are more resilient to forest insect pests.*

   Except for the damage caused by the windstorm, late-successional and old growth forest conditions would not be affected. The objective of this blowdown salvage EA is to recover wind damaged trees that resulted from a natural disturbance and does not propose to alter stand characteristics and structure beyond that caused by the windstorm. In areas where the windstorm created canopy openings and low tree densities, a diversity of conifer seedlings will be planted to help accelerate the restoration of late-successional conditions.

2. *Ensure structural and species diversity when logging, including the retention of large trees and snags, downed wood, and canopy closure. These practices can help minimize large outbreaks of insect pests.*

   Standing large, green trees, snags, and coarse woody debris will be left to provide species diversity, long-term biological legacies, and habitat for insect predators.

3. *Minimize soil compaction and harm to trees and tree roots when doing any thinning or logging. Soil compaction and tree damage can increase the susceptibility of forest stands to insect attack.*

   Widely spaced, designated skid trails will be used to minimize the area and extent of soil compaction and damage to residual trees. Existing skid trails will be used where possible.

4. *Use prescribed fire to promote more natural forest conditions. Insect pests are less of a problem under diverse natural conditions.*

   Prescribed underburns may be used as a follow-up to salvage and fuels treatments to reduce fuel loadings in moderate and severe damaged forest stands.

5. *Reduce current road densities, particularly in ecologically significant areas. Roads can serve as dispersal for nonnative invasive insect species.*

> No roads will be constructed within riparian reserves or late-successional reserves. No permanent roads will be constructed in deferred watersheds or key watersheds. The BLM will rip and plant 0.9 miles of temporary roads following use. Road densities and the percentage of area in roads will essentially remain the same in the Project Area (EA p. 109).

The effects of the selected alternative are described in Chapter 3 of the *Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage EA* (EA p. 26-141).

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The analysis did not indicate this action will involve any unique or unknown risks outside of those addressed and anticipated in the EIS for the Medford District Resource Management Plan and the Northwest Forest Plan EIS. While windstorm events do not occur routinely (they are more periodic), the methods for removing windthrown timber (e.g., tractor, cable, and helicopter yarding) are the same methods used on a regular basis when harvesting commercial timber. The anticipated effects of implementing the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project are well supported with referenced literature throughout the EA and are similar in nature to the effects estimated and observed for other timber sales implemented on lands in the Medford District BLM.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about future considerations.

The decision to implement Alternative 3 of the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will not set any precedents for future actions with significant effects. The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will implement actions approved for forest management under the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan (which incorporated the Northwest Forest Plan) and analyzed under the *Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement*. It is therefore consistent with the types of projects envisioned in the BLM Resource Management Plan and Northwest Forest Plan. Salvage of disturbance events, including windstorms, was anticipated under, and consistent with, the direction of the Medford District Resource Management Plan (EA p. 5). Any future salvage projects will have its own set of conditions will be subject to a new environmental analysis.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Cumulative environmental effects are “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions” (40 CFR § 1508.7). Analysis was conducted for this project and no significant cumulative impacts were identified outside of those addressed and anticipated in the *Final Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (1995) and the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. Analysis was performed at multiple scales and included current conditions, current actions, and foreseeable future actions on both private and Federal lands (EA p. 27-141).

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 of destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

The project archaeologist surveyed the Project Area for cultural and historic resources. The action will not affect objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources because none were identified. Implementation of Alternative 3 of the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project will not prevent the opportunity to research and measure impacts of salvage logging on windthrown timber. The windstorm affected over 6,800 acres and only a portion of these acres (6,100) is proposed for salvage. Research could be conducted in the remaining, unsalvaged acres affected by the windstorm that contain severe, moderate, and scattered blowdown.

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.

Two species listed as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act are found in the Project Area: northern spotted owl and SO/NC coho salmon. Critical habitat for each of these species has also been designated within the Project Area. Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act states that each Federal agency shall, in consultation with the Secretary, insure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to **jeopardize** the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or **adverse modification** of designated critical habitat. The BLM consulted with the appropriate authorizing agency for each listed species and those agencies concurred that the salvage project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the species or its critical habitat.

The BLM consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the activities associated with this salvage project. The Service agreed with the effects determination of *may affect, is not likely to adversely affect* for northern spotted owl or designated spotted owl critical habitat and documented their concurrence in the Letter of Concurrence [#8330.I0101(08)], dated July 10, 2008. This concurrence is based on the fact that all projects, both individually and collectively, will implement the standards and guidelines of the Northwest Forest Plan, comply with the Medford District's Resource Management Plan, and will incorporate the mandatory PDCs as described in Appendix A of the Letter of Concurrence.

The BLM consulted with NOAA Fisheries Service on this project for SO/NC coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and coho critical habitat. The only portion of the salvage project determined by BLM that may affect coho salmon is within the Big Butte Creek 5th field watershed and implementation of project design features will reduce the potential for effects. The BLM received a Letter of Concurrence (#2008/04499) from NOAA-Fisheries Service on August 12, 2008. This Letter of Concurrence covers all project activities within the Big Butte Creek 5th field watershed and is available in the project files at the Medford District BLM.

One plant species, *Fritillaria gentneri,* listed as endangered under the ESA is found within the Project Area. In spring 2008, the BLM surveyed proposed salvage areas within the range of *Fritillaria gentneri* that potentially contain suitable habitat. *Fritillaria gentneri* populations occur within the Project Area but none of the sites are located within salvage harvest units or road or

landing construction sites; therefore, the project would be "*no effect*" to T&E plants. Botanical surveys for Special Status plants were completed in July 2008 for all proposed salvage units, landings, and new permanent and temporary road construction. All units were surveyed and Special Status plant sites will be protected; they would not trend toward listing as a result of the proposed salvage harvest activities.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or Local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The selected alternative does not violate any known Federal, state, or local environmental protection laws. The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project is designed to comply with the Medford District Resource Management Plan and the Northwest Forest Plan (EA p. 7-8).

In the Project Area, 21 streams are included on the Department of Environmental Quality's 303(d) list for exceeding one or more of the following water quality criteria: stream temperature, E. coli, sediment, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, and pH. This project includes project design features to ensure compliance with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality water quality objectives. The Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project will have minimal adverse effects on sedimentation in the Project Area. The BLM acknowledges that some activities, such as culvert replacement and road work, may contribute to some short-term sediment delivery. However, this short-term sediment would not be adjacent to or nearby streams on the Department of Environmental Quality's 303(d) list for sediment. None of the projects in this EA drain into the 303(d) listed streams for sediment. The nearest 303(d) streams, South Fork Little Butte, Soda, Lost, or Lake Creeks within the Little Butte Creek 5th field watershed, are located at least 1.0 miles from salvage activities. Project activities that occur in the Little Butte Creek 5th field watershed that ultimately drain into Little Butte Creek would incorporate project design features to reduce the risk of sediment delivery to the maximum extent practicable (EA p. 17-23).

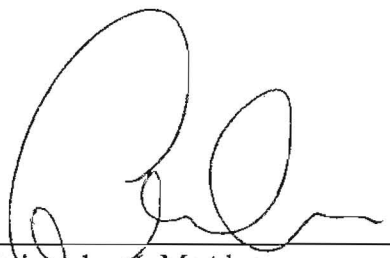
This decision will not result in significant wetland or floodplain-related impacts (per Executive Orders 11990 or 11998). Any wetlands within or near the Project Area have been identified, mapped, and protected by excluding wetlands from the Project Area through establishment and designation of riparian reserves. Only riparian reserves identified as severely damaged (70 acres) and adjacent to severely damaged matrix lands will be salvaged. Implementation of project design features for riparian reserves, such as applying minimum no-cut buffers of at least 75 feet, conducting all salvage activities above the inner slope breaks of the channel, and keeping equipment outside riparian reserves, will limit impacts to the aquatic system to immeasurable. Large wood levels within the riparian reserves would be maintained for future terrestrial and aquatic benefits. A reduced risk of fire and insect infestations will occur within salvaged riparian reserves due to the removal of severe riparian blowdown and reduced fine fuels. All Northwest Forest Plan and Medford District Resource Management Plan protection measures for riparian reserves and wetlands are incorporated in the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project design.

Required project design features are an integral part of the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage Project ensuring that project activities conform to the Management Actions/Direction of the Medford District Resource Management Plan as well as applicable laws including the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended

1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. A listing of the required project design features, and the objectives to be accomplished through the application of project design features, is included in *Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage EA* (p. 4-25).

Finding

I have determined the Butte Falls Blowdown Salvage project does not constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment; an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), with regard to the context and the intensity of the impacts described in the EA, and on my understanding of the project, review of the project analysis, and review of public comments. As previously noted, the analysis of effects has been completed within the context of the Medford District's Resource Management Plan and the Northwest Forest Plan. This conclusion is consistent with those plans and the anticipated effects are within the scope, type, and magnitude of effects anticipated and analyzed in those plans. The analysis of project effects has also occurred in the context of multiple spatial and temporal scales as appropriate for different types of impacts and the effects were determined to be insignificant.



9/03/08

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Date