



DECISION RECORD
for
Fizzy Stew Project
within the Revised Middle Cow LSR Landscape Planning Project
Environmental Assessment
(EA# OR118-05-022)

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Medford District
Glendale Resource Area

I. INTRODUCTION

The Revised Middle Cow LSR Project Environmental Assessment (EA) is a landscape scale analysis that includes several forest management treatment proposals designed to meet multiple federal directives such as the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP), the Northwest Forest Plan, and the National Fire Plan. This decision is applicable only to the Fizzy Stew Project associated with the Revised Middle Cow LSR EA. Three separate decisions were issued for timber sales (August 2006), hazardous fuel reduction and biomass utilization (January 2007), and snag creation and stream habitat improvement (June 2007).

The proposed treatments and environmental analysis for the Fizzy Stew Project applies the 1995 *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (1995 ROD/RMP). The Decision Record for the Fizzy Stew Project is signed after the 2008 ROD/RMP became effective December 30, 2008. The 2008 ROD allowed for transition projects, such as the Fizzy Stew Project, to be implemented consistent with the management direction of either the 1995 RMP or the 2008 RMP, at the discretion of the decisionmaker (2008 Medford ROD/RMP, p. 5). A transition from the old resource management plan to the new resource management plan avoids disruption of the management of BLM-administered lands and allows the BLM to utilize work already begun on the planning and analysis of projects.

The Fizzy Stew Project applies the management direction found in the 1995 Medford District RMP. The EA (EA#OR118-05-022) was completed in 2006 prior to completion of the 2008 ROD/RMP. Therefore, the decision incorporates 1995 RMP language such as “late successional reserve” and “riparian reserve” land allocations rather than interchange new 2008 RMP terms such as “Timber Management Areas”, “Late Successional Management Areas” and/or “Riparian Management Areas.” This allows the previous analysis to be used rather than modifying this work to use new terminology and discuss compliance with the 2008 RMP. The analysis remains relevant because, as explained in the 2008 ROD, projects consistent with the 1995 RMP in almost all cases will “result in less change to the current condition of the affected environment than if the projects were implemented consistent with the management direction” in the 2008 RMP (2008 ROD/RMP, p. 6).

The Fizzy Stew Project meets the requirements designated in the 2008 ROD for such transition projects:

1. A decision was not signed prior to the effective date of the 2008 ROD.
2. Preparation of the National Environmental Policy Act documentation began prior to the effective date of the 2008 ROD.
3. A decision on the project will be signed within two years of the effective date of the 2008 ROD.
4. Regeneration harvest would not occur in a late-successional management area or any harvest would not occur in deferred timber management area.
5. There would be no destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat designated for species listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

II. DECISION

I have decided to implement the Fizzy Stew Project via the tool of stewardship contracting to a portion of Alternative 2 of the Revised Middle Cow LSR Landscape Planning Project Environmental Assessment (revised EA) including all relevant Project Design Features (PDFs) to this project area.

This decision includes implementing approximately 171 acres of commercial density management and fuels reduction treatments (slashing, hand piling, pile burning, and underburning) on federal land in portions of Township (T) 32S, Range (R) 4W, Sections 20, 21, 28, & 29 (see attached map). The current condition of the stands is lacking some of the characteristics required for viable late successional habitat in the South Umpqua/Galesville Late Successional Reserve designated under the Northwest Forest Plan (1994). The stands are in need of thinning to accelerate the development of late successional characteristics as well as to promote forest health, stand vigor, and to prevent potential damage from insects, disease, and stand replacing wildfire. The late successional habitat prescriptions will be to enhance and maintain conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems. The forest health restoration prescriptions for these stands would focus on thinning the ladder fuels in the understory to prevent crown fire that can lead to severe and stand-replacing fire behavior. Also, the overstory would be thinned to decrease the competition for water, nutrients, and sunlight thereby resulting in healthier trees that are more resistant to insect and disease. Trees already affected by insect and disease would be felled and burned or otherwise removed from the site. The commercial material and biomass material cut (≥ 2 inches in diameter) during the thinning process would be removed to existing roads and taken from the project area for utilization. Cut material in this category, unable to be removed from the project area will be hand piled and burned or broadcast burned. Portions of units S21-2 and S28-1 will be treated for hazardous fuel reduction only, since the cut material cannot be easily removed due to topographical limitations for yarding operations and to reduce resource impacts where downhill yarding would otherwise be needed.

Descriptions of these treatments and the PDFs are found in Chapter 2 of the revised EA. See the attached map for unit locations.

Modifications to Alternative 2 for Fizzy Stew Project Units: A portion of the units for the Fizzy Stew Project, analyzed in the Revised Middle Cow LSR Project Environmental Assessment (EA#OR118-05-022), will have a reduction in treatment acres or change in the following: logging system, treatment type, and access. Access to units S28-1N, S28-1S, and S29-1S will be via temporary route construction and decommissioned after use as a part of this action and as analyzed in EA#OR118-05-022. However, the number and location of the temporary construction for these units will be modified from a total of six potential short spur roads (totaling 0.75 miles), extending into the units from the ridge, to seven temporary spurs totaling 0.45 miles located along the ridgeline. The modification was needed to more efficiently harvest the units and avoid a steeper location for temporary route construction. The more continuous roads would result in less ground disturbance. Six of the Fizzy Stew Project units (S29-1N, S29-1S, S29-2S, S21-2N, S21-2S, and S28-2) will be cable yarded instead of tractor logging, since this method is no longer logistically and economically feasible for the remaining portions of these Fizzy Stew Project units. Two of the Fizzy Stew Project units will be hazardous fuel reduction units rather than commercial density management units. See Table 1 below for further details.

On page 31 of the Revised EA, a Project Design Feature will be modified from “All trees to be yarded in cable units would be limbed and cut into lengths not to exceed 41 feet prior to yarding to minimize damage to residual trees,” to “all trees designated for cutting would be felled and may be whole tree yarded. If unacceptable stand or soil damage is occurring, bucking and/or limbing as directed by the Authorized Officer would be required.”

All haul routes and units within the Fizzy Stew Project will be treated for noxious weeds prior to density management or fuel reduction treatment.

These modifications are minor and do not change the scope of the action analyzed, nor do the modifications affect the adequacy of the analysis contained in the EA.

Table 1 – Fizzy Stew Unit Numbers and Harvest Type

Original Middle Cow LSR Unit #	Fizzy Stew Project Unit #	Forest Management Treatment	Acres	Harvest removal method	Fuels Treatment
29-1	S29-1N	CDM 40% retained CC	16	Uphill cable, Monocable	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S29-1S	CDM 40% retained CC	68	Uphill cable, Monocable, Chutes	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S29-2S	NDM/Fuels 40% retained CC	23	---	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
21-2	S21-2N	CDM 40% retained CC	4	Uphill cable, Monocable	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S21-2S	CDM 40% retained CC	28	Monocable, Chutes	L&S, HPB, potential underburning

Original Middle Cow LSR Unit #	Fizzy Stew Project Unit #	Forest Management Treatment	Acres	Harvest removal method	Fuels Treatment
28-1	S28-1N	CDM 40% retained CC	9	Uphill cable, Monocable	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S28-1N (fuels)	NDM/Fuels 40% retained CC	3	----	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S28-1S	CDM 40% retained CC	6	Uphill cable, Monocable	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
	S28-1S (fuels)	NDM/Fuels 40% retained CC	10	---	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
28-4	S28-2	CDM 40% retained CC	4	Uphill cable, Monocable	L&S, HPB, potential underburning
Total acres		171			

CDM – Commercial Density Management
L&S – Lop & Scatter

HPB – Hand pile & burn
CC – Canopy Closure

NDM = Non-commercial Density Management

III. DECISION RATIONALE

A. Plan Conformance

This Proposed Action conforms to the:

- *Medford Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (FEIS, 2008 and ROD/RMP, 2008);
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan (1998)* and tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (EIS, 1985).

The Proposed Action is consistent with management direction in the:

- *Final-Medford District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision* (FEIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995);
- *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan Amendment for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon, Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg Districts (May 2004)*

Since the planning and design for this project was initiated prior to the 2008 ROD, the project will apply all the Project Design Features (PDFs) in the Revised Middle Cow LSR Environmental Assessment (EA-OR118-05-022) relevant to the Fizzy Stew Project Area, which is consistent with the 1995 RMP.

The Fizzy Stew Project meets all known federal, state, and local law and requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs (see above).

The Revised Middle Cow LSR Environmental Assessment (EA-OR118-05-022) included effects analysis to Oregon Coast coho salmon, currently a federally listed threatened species. The OC coho Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) was listed as threatened on May 12, 2008 (73 FR 7816) by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) following a conclusion that OC coho in the ESU were not in danger of extinction but were likely to become so in the foreseeable future if present trends continue. Critical coho habitat for OC coho was designated by the NMFS on May 12, 2008 (73 FR 7816).

A No Effect Determination was made on the Oregon Coast coho salmon for the Fizzy Stew Project that concluded the project would have no effect on coho salmon, its critical habitat or Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). Additionally, the proposed project does not hinder or prevent attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives at the Fifth Field (HUC) watershed scale over the long term. The riparian buffer widths, PDFs, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) prevent any damage to fish-bearing streams with the project area.

The proposed harvest and haul activities, temporary spur route construction, and hazardous fuel reduction activities combined with the associated PDFs would have no effect on OC coho or CCH, nor would it have any adverse effects on EFH. The determination of no effect to OC coho salmon, CCH, and no adverse effects to EFH, neither Endangered Species Act nor Magnuson-Stevens Act consultation is necessary.

A Letter of Concurrence was issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on February 26, 2009 which concurred with the effects determination made by the Medford District BLM that the proposed action is a “may affect, not likely to adversely affect” to the spotted owl and its habitat.

B. Alternatives Considered

The alternatives considered included the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1), which serves as the baseline to compare effects, and the Proposed Action (Alternative 2), which initiated the environmental analysis process. A description of these alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 of the revised EA. Alternative 1 was not selected because this alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the project as described in Chapter 1 of the revised EA.

C. Public Involvement

Planning of the Revised Middle Cow LSR Project involved the public by mailing invitations to approximately 1,281 residents of the towns of Glendale and Azalea to attend a public scoping meeting provided on April 28, 2005 at the Azalea Grange Hall. About 30 local residents attended. A subsequent scoping report was mailed to those attending the meeting and to individuals and organizations that have expressed interest in Glendale Resource Area projects. The BLM received 11 public responses from either letters or emails during the scoping public comment period from April 14, 2005 to June 30, 2006. The Glendale Resource Area also

accepted public comments to the Middle Cow LSR Project through the quarterly BLM Medford Messenger publication beginning in the fall of 2004. The BLM considered substantive comments in the development of the alternatives analyzed in Appendix 1 of the EA and fully responded to these comments in Appendix 3 of the EA.

The Revised Middle Cow LSR Landscape Planning Project EA, including a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), was made available for public comment from July 5 to August 4, 2006. No specific comments were received concerning the use of stewardship contracting. BLM responses to the two letters were received during the 30-day comment period on the Revised EA and FONSI are contained in Attachment 1 of the three previously issued decisions; August 2006 (timber sales), January 2007 (hazardous fuels reduction and biomass utilization), and June 2007 (Snag creation and stream habitat improvement).

IV. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

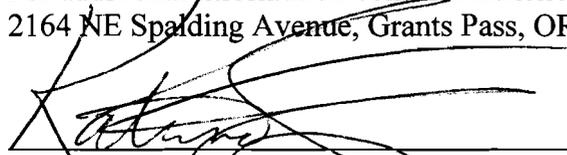
The proposed treatments for the Fizzy Stew Project were analyzed under the Revised Middle Cow LSR Environmental Assessment (EA-OR118-05-022). The EA included a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Two letters received during the 30 day public comment period for the EA and FONSI requested additional information but did not identify a flaw in assumptions, analysis, or data that would alter the environmental analysis disclosed in the EA or conclusions documented in the FONSI. It is my determination that Alternative 2 will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition for significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27. Therefore an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

This decision is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to persons who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Administrative recourse is available in accordance with BLM regulations and must follow the procedures and requirements described in 43 CFR § 5003.

To protest a forest management decision, a person must submit a written and signed protest to the Glendale Field Manager, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526 by the close of business (4:00 p.m.) not more than 15 days after publication of the Notice of Decision in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* newspaper. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and why it is believed to be in error, as well as cite applicable regulations. Faxed or emailed protests will not be considered. If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of the Notice of Decision, the decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the decision will be reconsidered in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available, and a final decision will be issued in accordance with 43 CFR § 5003.3.

For additional information contact Michelle Calvert, Ecosystem Planner, (541-471-6505), at 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526.



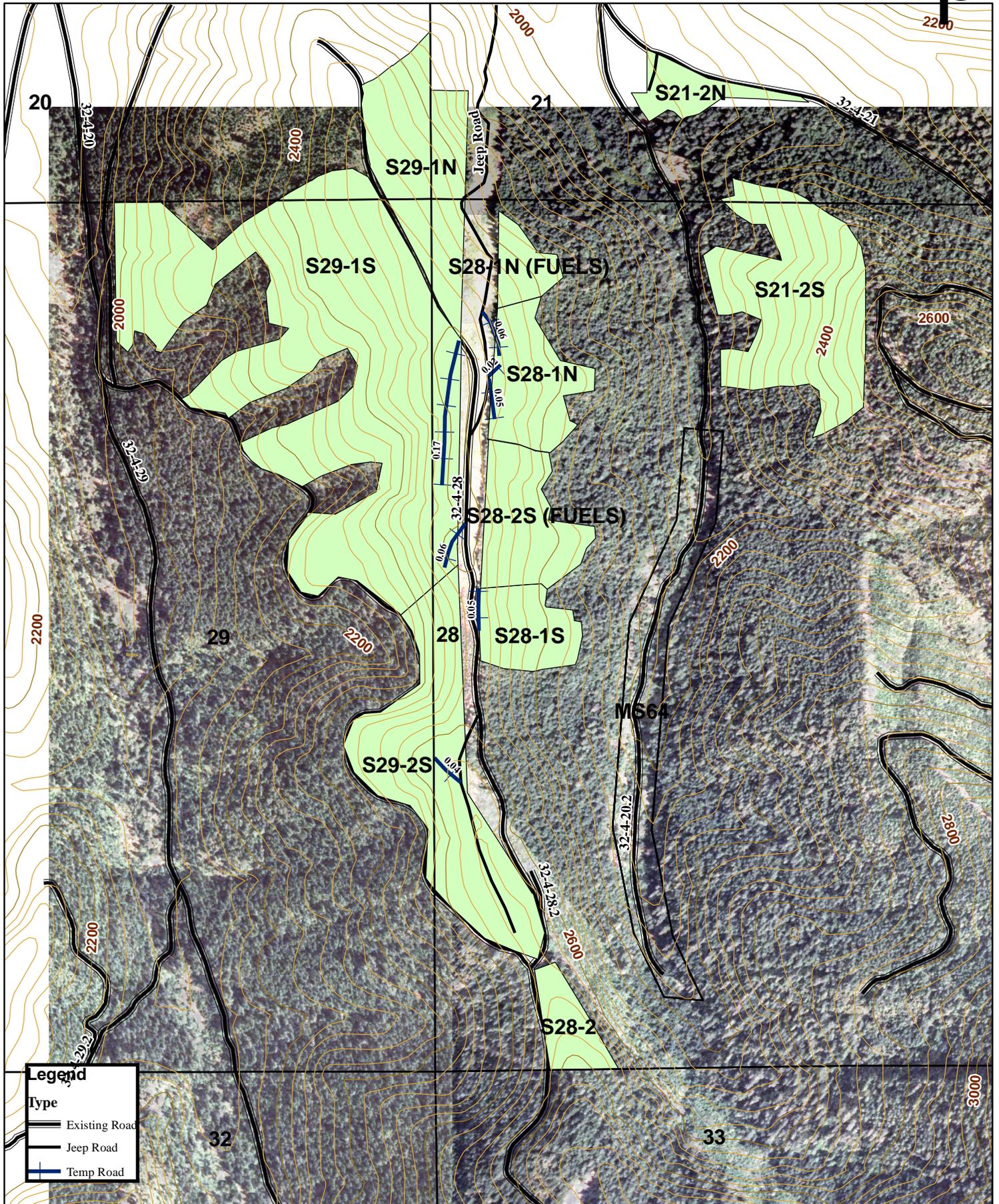
Katrina Symons
Field Manager, Glendale Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management



Date

FIZZY STEWARDSHIP

T32S-R4W Sec. 20, 21, 28, 29



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