

**DECISION RECORD**  
for  
**Hayes Ridge Water Source**  
**Environmental Assessment Number #OR-118-08-011**

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Medford District  
Glendale Resource Area  
Douglas County, Oregon

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Hayes Ridge Water Source Environmental Assessment (EA#OR-118-08-011) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were published together on March 3, 2009 and available for a 15 day public comment period. The BLM did not receive any public comments on the EA/FONSI.

A copy of the EA, including FONSI, can be obtained from the Grants Pass Interagency Office, 2164 NE Spalding Ave, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM, closed on holidays.

This decision conforms with 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); Final Supplement to the 2004 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement To Remove The Survey And Manage Mitigation Measure Standards And Guidelines* (FSEIS, 2007 and ROD, 2007).

## **TRANSITION FROM THE 1995 PLAN TO THE 2008 PLAN**

The planning, design, and analysis for the Hayes Ridge Water Source Project started at the beginning of 2008 under the 1995 *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (1995 ROD/RMP), and was completed after the 2008 ROD/RMP became effective December 30, 2008. The 2008 ROD allowed for transition projects, such as the Hayes Ridge Water Source 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 Hayes Ridge Water Source Project incorporates the management direction found in the 1995 Medford District RMP. Much of the EA analysis was completed prior to signing of the 2008 ROD/RMP. Therefore, the effects analysis below will incorporate 1995 RMP language such as “matrix” and “riparian reserve” land allocations rather than interchange new 2008 RMP terms such as “Timber Management Areas” and “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).

This 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 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 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.

Since the planning and design for this project was initiated prior to the 2008 ROD, it contains features consistent with the 1995 RMP but not consistent with the management direction in the 2008 Resource Management Plan. These features include:

- Project Design Features (PDFs)
  - Refueling of chainsaws and pumps would be done no closer than 150 feet of any stream or wet area. Spilled fuel and oil would be cleaned-up and would be disposed of at an approved disposal site.

## **DECISION**

Based on site-specific analysis, the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the 1995 RMP and 2008 RMP, I have decided to approve the construction of the Hayes Ridge Water Source Project as described in Alternative 2.

Alternative 2 entails developing a new water source for use by fire suppression resources in the event of a wildland fire. Associated activities would include expanding and fortifying a spring; installing a spring box; constructing a trench to bury a water pipeline; installing two water

storage tanks; and cutting and removing 18 merchantable trees (8-14" diameter at breast height) for a helicopter flight path around the water storage tanks.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The alternatives considered in detail 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 each alternative is found on pages 12-14 of the EA. Additionally Appendix 1 Alternative Development Summary on page 23 of the EA contains a discussion of alternative consideration.

The Hayes Ridge Water Source interdisciplinary team completed an assessment of the Environmental Elements in Appendix 2. The elements were either "Not Present" or "Not Affected" by the Proposed Action; therefore, additional discussion of the elements in Chapter 3 was deemed unnecessary as it would not contribute to further understanding of the potential environmental consequences and thus the decision making process.

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) states that "Ultimately, of course, it is not better documents but better decisions that count. NEPA's process is not to generate paperwork-even excellent paperwork- but to foster excellent action" (40 CFR § 1500.1 (c)).

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

Alternative 2 meets the purpose and need as outlined in the EA. Specifically, this alternative's location provides decrease response time during the initial attack phase of fire suppression in remote areas and containing wildfires at minimal acreages required by the Fire Detection Services contract between the Medford District BLM and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). This decision conforms with the 2008 RMP and is consistent with the management direction contained in the 1995 RMP. This alternative also complies with laws such as the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and National Historic Preservation Act.

The Hayes Ridge Water Source Project (OR-118-08-011) analyzes for effects of project elements that incorporates the management direction found in the 1995 RMP. Based upon review of the EA and supporting project record, I conclude that Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) would not result in effects beyond those already identified in the 2008 RMP/FEIS.

In the development of Alternative 2 all practicable means have been employed to avoid and/or minimize environmental harm.

The Hayes Ridge Water Source is located approximately 730 feet from the ridgetop. There are a few stream crossings but no headwalls within the proposed project area. Slopes on the south side of the ridge are 40% and have sufficient course ground cover, in the form of ground vegetation and/or downed woody debris and fine overstory litter, to keep any small quantities of erosion

primarily on site. Erosion would not result in a visible increase in stream turbidity, or a measurable increase in stream sediment deposition. The proposed water source construction would not affect stream temperatures, large woody debris recruitment, or any measurable changes in sediment load to streams or fish habitat because canopy cover over a stream would not be removed and the stream is hydrologically disconnected, since it travels subsurface below the project area. The riparian present in the Project Area is fed by two springs, diverting a portion of the water from one spring would not impede the riparian to supply water. The Selected Alternative would result in a half acre of disturbance from expanding and fortifying a spring; installing a spring box; constructing a trench to bury a water pipeline; creating a pad to install two water storage tanks; grading and graveling the pad, and clearing a helicopter flight path around the water storage tanks. The removal of 18 trees would result in ground disturbance on less than an acre and no additional soil compaction would occur from installing two water storage tanks on the existing road right-of-way footprint. The above activities would not permanently remove the number of acres available for timber production on Matrix lands.

Consultation for the Endangered Species Act with the USFWS or NOAA Fisheries is not necessary since the Selected Alternative would have no effect on listed species or their habitat (including critical habitat). The removal of approximately 18 trees (8-14 inches dbh) for the helicopter flight path and dip site, would create less than a half acre gap on the landscape and would be contiguous with the road gap. Eighteen trees (8-14" dbh) would be cut, removed, and hauled to clear a helicopter flight path at the two proposed water storage tanks along the 31-8-31.2 road. These trees are within 100 feet of the permanent opening of the road. The area affected would be approximately half an acre. The trees proposed for removal are at the top end of a 25 year old regenerating BLM plantation. This action would slightly widen the gap that the road forms whether the adjacent stands are dispersal habitat in the next few decades or nesting/roosting/foraging habitat in the longer term. Increasing the size of the gap created by the road by such a small distance and forming a half acre opening would not affect the stand's ability to function as dispersal habitat for the spotted owl immediately following the project's completion.

The site is approximately 1 mile southwest of the closest known spotted owl nest. This is well beyond the distance for disturbance caused by chain saws or heavy equipment. Therefore, there is also no disturbance effect expected to this species from the Proposed Action.

Alternative 1 was not selected because it would not meet the purpose and need of the project as outlined in the EA, Chapter 1.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

The BLM did not receive any public comments during the 15-day review period for the EA and 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.

## 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. In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulations (43 CFR § 5003.2(1)), the decision for this project will not become effective, or be open to formal protest, until the first Decision Notice appears in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located.

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 (4:30 p.m.) not more than 15 days after publication of the Decision Notice. 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.

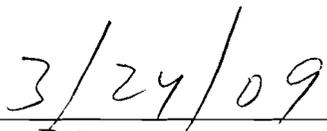
## IMPLEMENTATION DATE

If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of the Decision Notice, 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

## CONTACT PERSON

For additional information contact either Katrina Symons, Glendale Field Manager, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526; telephone 541-471-6653 or Michelle Calvert, Ecosystem Planner, 541-471-6505.

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date