CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CE) DETERMINATION & DECISION RECORD (OR116-08-35)

Project Name: Howard Blowdown Salvage
BLM Office: Ashland Resource Area, Medford District Phone #: (541) 618-2497

Location: Howard Prairie Lake Area – T38S-R3E-Section 25 - Jackson County, Oregon.

Description of the Proposed Action

The project area is adjacent to the Howard Prairie County Park. The purpose of this project is to capture the economic value of recently downed timber resulting from the 2007-2008 winter wind storms. The project would remove and sell commercial sized trees that have been blown over or had tops blown out due to the windstorm. Some trees have the tops broken off. The lower portions of trees with broken tops would be cut, felled and removed. Trees would be harvested along the road mentioned above and using designated skid trails where trees are not accessible via the existing road.

Some trees would be sold for commercial use while others would be left on site for resource protection needs. Some trees are rotten or broken and are not suitable for commercial wood products. These would be left in place to provide coarse wood debris needs. Approximately 15 truck loads of trees are expected to be removed.

Project Design Features

- Large coarse woody debris of 120 lineal feet (16" X 16') per acre will be maintained where practical.
- Slash will be lopped and scattered, as determined by the sale administrator. Slash will be reviewed by a fuels technician and if needed piled and burned during the rainy season.
- Road surfaces, ditches and culvert catch basins will be cleaned of slash and debris.
- Road use will be discontinued during periods of wet weather. Many trees to be removed are accessible from the existing road. In the areas that can not be reached from the road, designated skid roads will be used.
- The BLM would immediately shut down all timber harvest and yarding operations if excessive soil damage would occur due to changing weather or soil moisture conditions. Tractor yarding on designated skid trails would occur between June 15 to October 15 or on approval by the Contract Administrator. Some variations in these dates would be permitted dependent upon weather and soil moisture conditions.
- Purchaser will be required to meet current state fire regulations.
- There are no known sites of any Medford District Sensitive plants in the project area. If any are discovered during implementation of this project, they will be protected as recommended by BLM's botanist.
- All vehicles and heavy equipment working off improved roads will be cleaned of all dirt and debris before being transported to the work site.
- Weed monitoring and treatments will occur for at least three consecutive years after contract termination but dependent on funding.
- There are two populations of noxious weeds (Canada thistle) adjacent to a unit and/or haul route. The two known weed sites will be treated prior to the salvage operation, including road maintenance work, by BLM.
- The northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) is the only federally listed wildlife species that could be affected by the proposed project. In order to reduce the potential for disturbance to nesting spotted owls, operations in Unit 1A would not take place between March 1 and June 30. Operations in Unit 1B would not take place between March 1 and September 30.

Plan Conformance Review

The Bureau of Land Management completed internal scoping with BLM resource specialists. A public meeting was held in Butte Falls to discuss blow down salvage projects. A letter went out to numerous interested parties explaining BLM's intent to salvage blow down timber through several NEPA documents. 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), Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and interim guidance for meeting BLM's responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Executive Order 13186.

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.

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.

Edward Reilly	Environmental Coordinator	7-22-2008
Prepared by	Title	Date

Categorical Exclusion Review

To implement the removal and use of hazardous trees and blow down 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:

Yes	No	Categorical Exclusion Exception
( )	(X)	1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.
( )	(X)	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.
( )	(X)	3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan.
( )	(X)	4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks.
( )	(X)	5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
( )	(X)	6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. *(40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)).*
( )	(X)	7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
( )	(X)	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)	9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
( )	(X)	10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
( )	(X)	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)	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).

Decision
It is my decision to implement the Howard Blowdown project as described in the proposed action.

Decision Rationale
The proposed action has been reviewed by Ashland 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

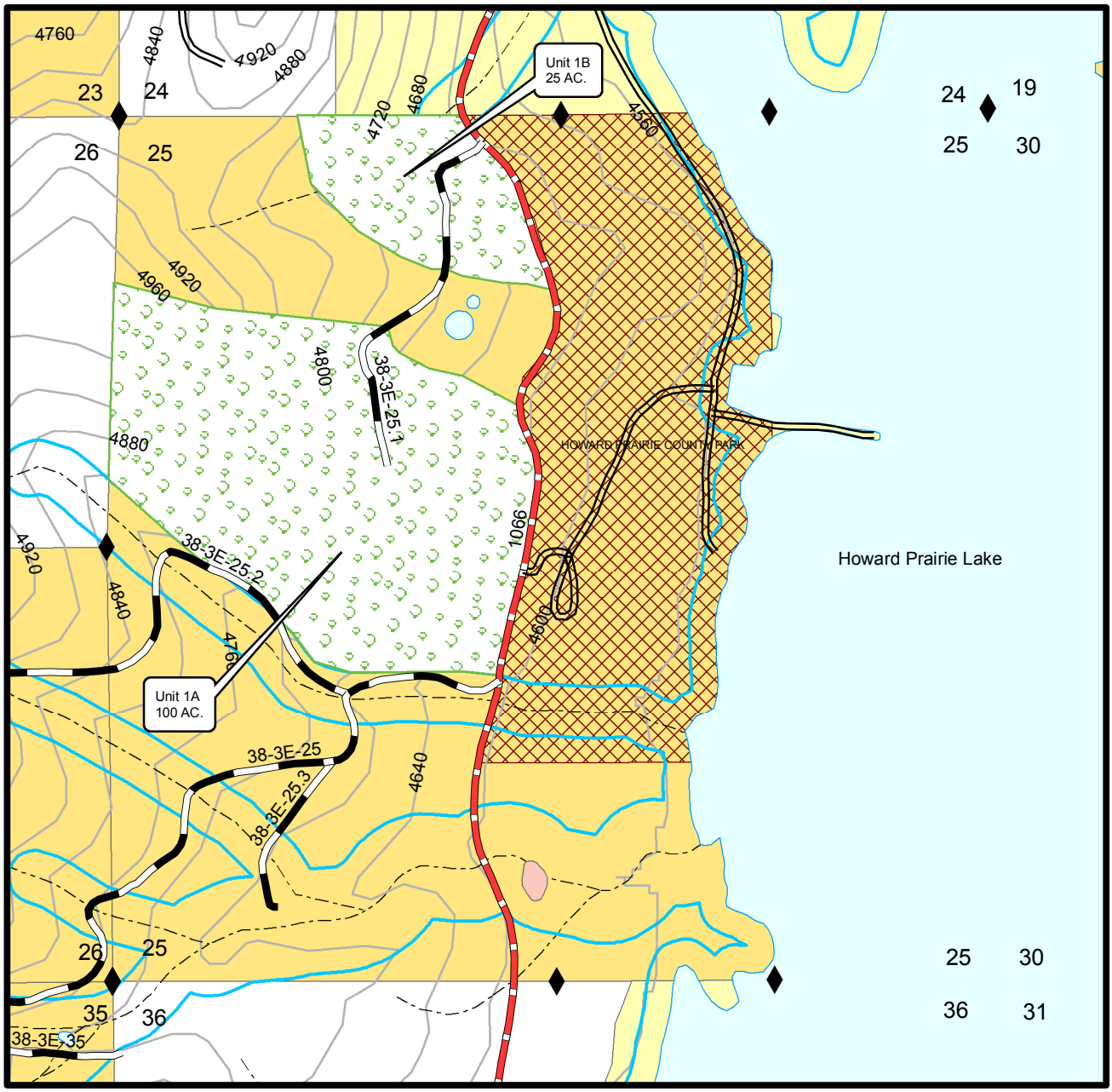
John Gerritsma
Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

7/24/08
Date

Contact Person
For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact: Ed Reilly at (541) 618-2497.

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 5003.3 subsection (a), protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the notification date of a decision. The date this Decision Record is published on BLM's Website serves as the effective date of this decision. 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.

HOWARD BLOW DOWN



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CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET

0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000

Feet

Legend

GATES
Corners

Roads

Jurisdiction

- Bureau of Land Management
- County route
- Forest Service
- Interstate Highway
- Not Inventoried
- Private road (no symbol)
- State highway
- Unit
- RIPARIAN_RESERVE

Hydro Features

- Impoundments
- Islands
- Lakes and Ponds
- Wet Areas
- Streams
- Contours-40'
- county_parks

Ownership

- FS
- BR
- BL