Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record for FY 2012–2014 Silviculture Practices in Butte Falls and Ashland Resource Areas—Reforestation, Young Stand Management, and Forest Condition Restoration Treatments

DOI-BLM-OR-M050-2012-0007-CX

A. Background

Proposed Action Title: Fiscal Year 2012–2014 Silviculture Practices in the Butte Falls and Ashland Resource Areas—Reforestation, Young Stand Management, and Forest Condition Restoration Treatments

Location: Butte Falls and Ashland Resource Areas, Jackson County, Oregon

Proposed Action

The Butte Falls and Ashland Resource Areas, Medford District are proposing reforestation and young stand management treatments to accomplish land use allocation objectives described in the 1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP, p.183-186). The proposed reforestation, young stand management, and forest condition restoration treatments would be scheduled to assure the treatment areas maintain developmental paths so that desired stand characteristics result in the future. Treatments would include forest stands up to 80 years old and conifers less than 8 inches in diameter breast height (DBH). All proposed silviculture treatments would be implemented on sites located throughout the Butte Falls and Ashland Resource Areas over a 3-year period. All sites would be accessed using existing road systems.

Reforestation

Reforestation objectives are to promptly establish forested stands on forest lands. Proposed treatments include planting, scalping, grubbing, mulching, installing seedling netting or tubing, and installing shade cards. Reforestation activities would occur after timber sales, stewardship projects, or wildfires; in areas needing stabilization; and in watershed restoration projects.

Tree planting would be accomplished using hand tools such as shovels or hoedads. The trees would be bare-root or containerized seedlings, 1 to 3 years old, and 6 to 24 inches high. The soil around the planted tree would be prepared by scalping away vegetation for a 12-inch radius around the planting hole.

Scalping would be completed using hand tools such as hazel hoes. This treatment would consist of removing all vegetation up to 1-inch in diameter for a 2-foot radius around all planted seedling. Seedlings to be treated would be generally less than 5 years old.

Grubbing would be completed using hand held tools such as hazel hoes or pulaskis. Grubbing would remove vegetation up to 3 inches in diameter for a 4-foot radius around the seedling. Seedlings to be treated would be between 1 and 4 feet high.

Mulching would consist of placing a 3-foot by 3-foot paper or synthetic (plastic) mulch material with an opening in the middle over the seedling. Vegetation would be scalped away from the seedling for a 3-foot by 3-foot distance before the mulch is placed. Approximately 5, U-shaped metal pins 6 inches long would be used to secure the mulch material. Mulch would lay flat on the ground to inhibit unwanted vegetation growth.

Seedling tubing or netting would include placing a rigid plastic mesh "Vexar" tube or flexible plastic netting over planted seedlings to reduce animal browse. Tubing would also require using a bamboo stake approximately 30 inches long, woven through the tubing and stuck in the ground to hold the tube upright.

Shade card installation would involve placing a 12- by 10-inch flat cardboard or plastic mesh material on the south side of a young seedling to provide shade for the young seedling. It would be held upright by a wooden stake or metal U-shaped pin. The shade card would be placed about 6 to 8 inches from the seedling to reduce mortality during the hot, droughty summer season. Metal pins would be removed from the site after seedlings have established themselves.

Young stand management treatments

Proposed young stand management treatments would place young stands that are generally between 5 to 40 years old on developmental paths toward improved vigor, increased growth, greater resistance to disturbance, and desired species composition and structure. Generally these stands are the result of a past disturbance such as a timber sale, wildfire, or windstorm. Proposed treatments include controlling vegetation competition, precommercial thinning, and pruning.

Vegetation competition control (maintenance and release) and precommercial thinning would cut competing vegetation (excess conifers, hardwoods, and shrubs) to provide additional moisture, light, nutrients, and growing space for desired conifers and hardwoods. Competing hardwoods and brush increase competition for needed resources such as nutrients, moisture, or light, and reduce the growth and development of desired species. Treatments would shift stand species composition and structure to desired conditions. Mechanized equipment would be limited to chainsaws or other handheld devices.

Vegetation maintenance treatments would cut competing hardwoods and brush in areas that were planted to desired species, typically conifers, or had young natural regeneration. Competition from other vegetation would cause a risk of mortality to desired species. Generally these stands are less than 10 years old. Brush and hardwoods greater than 12 inches high and less than 8 inches DBH, not reserved, would be cut. Hardwoods would be cut leaving a 30- to 40-foot spacing. Clumps of hardwoods would have one stem retained on a 30- to 40-foot spacing. Conifers would be retained.

Vegetation release treatments would cut competing hardwoods and brush in areas that were planted to desired species, typically conifers, or had young natural regeneration. Generally, these stands are older (10 to 20 years) than stands receiving maintenance treatments and are not in imminent danger of mortality from competition. Brush and hardwoods greater than 12 inches high and less than 8 inches DBH, not reserved, would be cut. Hardwoods would be cut leaving a

30- to 40-foot spacing between reserved hardwood stems. Clumps of hardwoods would have one stem retained on a 30- to 40-foot spacing. Conifers would be retained.

Precommercial thinning would cut competing conifers and hardwoods in dense stands where competition for resources would reduce the growth and development of desired species. Dominant conifers are preferred for retention; species preference depends on site conditions. Generally, drier sites would retain more ponderosa pine and incense cedar, and moist sites would retain more Douglas-fir, sugar pine, and true fir. Conifer spacing would range from 16 feet (170 trees per acre) to 20 feet (109 trees per acre) or could be treated on a variable spacing that would range from 12 feet (303 trees per acre) to 16 feet (170 trees per acre) within a treatment unit, depending on size of conifers to be retained. In variable spacing, generally conifers less than 7 feet in height would be retained at the higher densities, depending on stand condition and management objectives. Hardwoods could be cut and spaced between 30 and 40 feet depending on their densities and management objectives; they may be retained in some precommercial thinning areas.

Pruning treatments would be used to lessen the impact of white pine blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola*) or to enhance clear wood production and tree value. Pruning to address white pine blister rust would involve removing lower live limbs to a maximum height of 9 feet or 50 percent of the total tree height, whichever is less. This could remove infected branches and decrease the occurrence of new infections. Pruning would provide the additional benefit of reducing fuel hazards by removing ladder fuels. Pruning could be completed in two or three phases to reach desired height. In all pruning areas, pruning slash would be scattered at least 1 foot from the base of the pruned tree. Pruning would also improve wood quality on individual trees by removing the bottom portion of the live and dead crowns up to 22 feet or equal to 50 percent of the total tree height, whichever is less.

Proposed forest condition restoration treatments

Proposed forest condition restoration treatments would occur in established forest stands up to 80 years old; however, conifers 8 inches DBH and larger would be reserved. In general, these stands naturally regenerated after some past disturbance, either natural or from human activity. Stand conditions vary from sites dominated by tree-form hardwoods with some component of conifers, to sites containing dense conifers with a minor tree-form hardwood component. Forest condition restoration would reduce the density of forest stands, increase stand vigor, influence species composition and structure, and reduce the susceptibility to insect and disease. These treatments would also reduce the risk of stand-replacement fire. Mechanized equipment would be limited to chainsaws or other handheld devices. Proposed treatments include restoration thinning and understory density reduction.

In restoration thinning areas, conifers and hardwoods, less than 8 inches DBH would be manually cut using chainsaws or hand tools. Leave tree spacing would range from 16 feet (170 trees per acre) to 25 feet (70 trees per acre) for conifers and up to 40 feet for hardwoods, based on site productivity and resource objectives. In some instances, tree-form hardwoods between 8 and 12 inches DBH would be girdled at a spacing up to 40 feet.

Understory density reduction would cut conifers and hardwoods less than 8 inches DBH as described in restoration thinning, with an emphasis on reducing the understory vegetation competition from hardwoods, brush, and excess conifers. Spacing would range from 12 feet to 25 feet for conifers and up to 40 feet for hardwoods. All brush could be cut. Generally, these stands have smaller trees than restoration thinning areas, and they are not a part of the overstory.

Activity-created slash treatment

Activity-created slash would be treated to reduce the fuel depth in areas. In all treatment areas, slash would be lopped to no more than 8 feet in length, limbed, and scattered such that it is less than 3 feet deep. The primary purpose of activity created slash treatments is to reduce the fuel depth.

A BLM fuels specialist would conduct site-specific evaluations to determine the extent of slash treatment. Proximity to rural interface areas, private lands, or a fuels hazard reduction project would be assessed. Treatment units in need of fuels reduction that are determined to be in a stand condition (conifer tree diameter and height) to withstand the fire effects from piling activity-created slash would not be treated for young stand management at this time and would be assessed for hand pile, cover, and burn treatment under a separate environmental analysis document.

Project Design Features

1. Plant native conifer species primarily on an 8-foot by 8-foot or 10-foot by 10-foot spacing; however, wider spacing could be employed in site-specific instances. Conifer species planted would consist of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and incense cedar. Site conditions would dictate species to be planted.
2. Hardwood seedlings may be planted, particularly in restoration areas and riparian zones. Species planted will be native and adapted to the site. Hardwood species considered for planting include red alder, Oregon ash, willow, big leaf maple, dogwood, and cottonwood. Shrub species include oceanspray, hazel, ninebark, and ceanothus.
3. Scalping, grubbing, and brush and hardwood cutting is not allowed within 25 feet slope distance (each side) of intermittent streams, springs, seeps, ponds, wetlands, and specific dry draws identified on individual maps prior to treatment implementation, and within 50 feet slope distance (each side) of all perennial and fish-bearing streams. Tree planting will not occur within 10 feet of all streams or within springs, seeps, ponds, or wetlands. Conifer precommercial thinning and pruning may occur through riparian areas to promote increased growth of riparian zone conifers. This will be determined by fisheries biologists or hydrologists based on site-specific conditions in the riparian area and identified on individual treatment area maps before treatment implementation. The same no-cut buffer distance may be required for conifers.
4. Do not cut madrone, black oak, and white oak over 6 inches DBH, and preserve riparian hardwoods such as Oregon ash, big leaf maple, and red alder within riparian reserves.
5. Remove and lop-and-scatter slash from all drivable road surfaces, drainage ditches, fill slopes, and cut banks.

6. Seasonally restrict activities from March 1 through June 30 within 200 feet of northern spotted owl nest sites, unless instructed differently by the BLM wildlife biologist. The restriction may be extended up to September 30 if nesting activity is occurring at that time.
7. Seasonally restrict activities within 0.5 mile of bald eagle or peregrine falcon nests or important daily roosts from January 1 to August 15, unless instructed differently by the BLM wildlife biologist. Reasons for lifting the restriction may include the work area is hidden from view of the raptor or the activity noise would be blocked by topographic relief, or activities are similar to public use to which eagles are acclimated.
8. Resource Area botanist will review the proposed treatments and units to determine if surveys for BLM Special Status species are needed prior to treatment. If special status plants are found within treatment units, implement appropriate protective measures including protection buffers, seasonal restrictions, or both.
9. If evidence of blackstain disease (*Leptographium wageneri*) is found within a unit to be treated, establish a buffer of uncut conifers with a radius of 25 feet from any infected area.
10. Refuel equipment, including chainsaws and other hand power tools, at least 100 feet from water bodies to prevent direct delivery of contaminants into a water body.
11. Prior to signing a task order, areas scheduled to be planted, thinned, or otherwise treated under this CX may need to be surveyed for cultural and paleontological resources. Previously recorded sites occurring within activity areas may need to be revisited to determine appropriate mitigation.
12. Archaeological or paleontological sites occurring within activity areas will be flagged for avoidance and will be identified to the project proponent/implementor on a map.
13. Brush and tree removal within ditch systems will be discussed with archaeological staff prior to removal. Any wooden features within ditches must remain in place and will be protected. All brush and other woody materials will be piled away from the ditches for burning.
14. All interested Tribal group and State Historic Preservation Officer consultation will be completed prior to the signing of task orders produced under this CX, if such consultation is required.
15. Operate motor vehicles on existing roads. Restrict road use on unsurfaced roads to the dry season (typically May 1 to October 31), unless the road is sufficiently dry to protect the road and resource values. Suspend road use on unsurfaced roads anytime of year during precipitation events when use would cause water to be channeled away from designated road drainage and cause elevated stream turbidity and sedimentation.
16. Ensure management activities do not damage rangeland improvements such as fencing, gates, cattle guards, and water improvements. If damage occurs, notify the District Rangeland Management Specialist.
17. Position gates as found (open or closed).

18. To prevent the spread of noxious weeds and nonnative invasive species, management practices will include treating infestations, scheduling projects outside of weed seed dispersal times, designating parking and access and egress routes to minimize exposure to weeds, and requiring equipment to be washed.
19. Pick up all trash and garbage and dispose of properly.
20. Coordinate management activities occurring adjacent to or within recreation sites and designated trails with the Outdoor Recreation Planner.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Resource Management Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the 1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995 ROD/RMP) because it is specifically provided for in management direction on page 62:

> *Design and implement silvicultural treatments in stands that are in a condition, or that will soon be in a condition, which prevents management objectives from being achieved. Treatments are intended to restore the ability of stands to respond to other management and to reduce the risk of mortality from insects, disease, and wildfire. Treatments will consist of thinning of stands, forest fertilization, reduction of understory vegetation, reduction of fuel ladders, and restoration of more stable plant communities.*

Survey and Manage Exemption

The 2012 Silviculture Practices Project applies a 2006 Exemption from a stipulation entered by the court in litigation regarding Survey and Manage species and the 2004 Record of Decision related to Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure in *Northwest Ecosystem Alliance v. Rey*, No. 04-844-MJP (W.D. Wash., Oct. 10, 2006). In 2006, the District Court (Judge Pechman) invalidated the agencies' 2004 RODs eliminating Survey and Manage due to NEPA violations. Following the District Court's 2006 ruling, parties to the litigation entered into a stipulation exempting certain categories of activities from the Survey and Manage standards and guidelines, including both predisturbance surveys and known site management. Also known as the Pechman Exemptions, the Court's Order from October 11, 2006 directs:

> *Defendants shall not authorize, allow, or permit to continue any logging or other ground-disturbing activities on projects to which the 2004 ROD applied unless such activities are in compliance with the 2001 ROD (as the 2001 ROD was amended or modified as of March 21, 2004), except that this order will not apply to:*
>
> *a. Thinning projects in stands younger than 80 years old:*
>
> *b. Replacing culverts on roads that are in use and part of the road system, and removing culverts if the road is temporary or to be decommissioned;*
>
> *c. Riparian and stream improvement projects where the riparian work is riparian planting, obtaining material for placing in-stream, and road or trail decommissioning; and where the stream improvement work is the placement of large wood, channel and floodplain reconstruction, or removal of channel diversions; and*

d. The portions of project involving hazardous fuel treatments where prescribed fire is applied. Any portion of a hazardous fuel treatment project involving commercial logging will remain subject to the survey and management requirements except for thinning of stands younger than 80 years old under subparagraph a. of this paragraph.

Per the 2011 Settlement Agreement, the 2006 Pechman Exemptions remain in force:

> *The provisions stipulated to by the parties and ordered by the court in Northwest Ecosystem Alliance v. Rey, No. 04-844-MJP (W.D. Wash. Oct. 10, 2006), shall remain in force. None of the following terms or conditions in this Settlement Agreement modifies in any way the October 2006 provisions stipulated to by the parties and ordered by the court in Northwest Ecosystem Alliance v. Rey, No. 04844-MJP (W.D. Wash. Oct. 10, 2006).*

C. Compliance with NEPA

Prior to treatment, all proposed treatment areas would be reviewed and cleared for treatment by resource area specialists. Site specific treatment prescriptions and maps would be developed for each treatment area, reviewed for appropriateness of treatment and for necessary clearances, and applicable project design features implemented for each treatment area.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 C(4), which allows for "Precommercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices" and 516 DM 11.9 C(3), which allows for "seeding or reforestation of timber sales or burn areas where no chaining is done, no pesticides are used, and there is no conversion of timber type or conversion of nonforest to forest land. Specific reforestation activities covered include: seeding and seedling plantings, shading, tubing (browse protection), paper mulching, bud caps, ravel protection, application of non-toxic big game repellant, spot scalping, rodent trapping, fertilization of seed trees, fence construction around out-planting sites, and collection of pollen, scions and cones."

These categorical exclusions are appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

D. NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

The Code of Federal Regulations at 43 CFR § 46.215 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:

Butte Falls Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Proposed activities will follow established rules concerning health and safety, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules.		
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; 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
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The project, by design, is not located in any park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; or national monuments. Projects would not be implemented in prime farmlands, wetlands or ecologically significant or critical areas. The BLM Archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations and any known significant sites or potentially significant (unevaluated) sites located within treatment locations will be flagged for avoidance.		
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Based on past experience from these types of activities, there are no predicted environmental effects from the proposed action that are considered to be highly controversial nor are there unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses. Land use allocations and goals for the affected lands were established and analyzed under the ROD/RMP and the corresponding environmental impact statement.		
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are long-standing practices on BLM-administered lands. Past experience from these types of activities has shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique, or unknown risks.		

Butte Falls Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
Initial RW		
Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are addressed and authorized under the existing ROD/RMP. This project will implement the decisions made in that land use plan. The proposed activities are widely used on Federal lands throughout Oregon and there is no evidence this type of project would establish a precedent or decision for future actions that would have significant environmental effects.		
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Initial SLS		
Rationale: The BLM has conducted these types of activities in the past with no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects.		
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.		/
Initial C.F.		
Rationale: The activities described in the CX are considered an exempt undertaking according to the working agreement the Oregon BLM has with SHPO as long as there are no cultural resource concerns within treatment areas. The BLM Archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations and any known significant sites or potentially significant (unevaluated) sites located within treatment locations will be flagged for avoidance.		
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
Initial D.R.		
Rationale: Areas proposed for treatment will be reviewed by the BLM botanist, wildlife biologist, and fisheries biologist before any activity begins. Appropriate buffers and project design features will be implemented to avoid adverse effects to threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat.		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Initial RW		
Rationale: The proposed activities conform to RMP direction for management of public lands in the Medford District and comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.		

Butte Falls Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Similar actions have occurred throughout the District and there is no evidence that this type of project would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on said populations.		
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 130007).		X
	Initial	
Rationale: The activities described in the CX are considered an exempt undertaking according to the working agreement the Oregon BLM has with SHPO as long as there are no cultural resource concerns within treatment areas. The BLM archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations to determine if there is a potential to limit access to or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Work may commence when clearance is given.		
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).		X
	Initial MW	
Rationale: The proposed activities outlined in this CX will not contribute to the spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species across Federal lands any faster than if the proposed activities did not occur. Botanical surveys conducted prior to project implementation identify infestations of noxious weeds and nonnative invasive species in or adjacent to proposed units. These infestations will be treated per Medford District's *Integrated Weed Management Plan and Environmental Assessment OR-110-98-14.*		

Butte Falls Resource Area Categorical Exclusion Reviewers:

Name	Title	Date	Initials
Robyn Wicks	NEPA Coordinator	6/11/12	RW
Marcia Wineteer	Botanist	6/7/12	mw
Dave Roelofs	Wildlife Biologist	5/15/12	D.R.
Dale Johnson	Fish Biologist	5/11/12	DJ
Shawn Simpson	Hydrologist	5/29/12	SS
Amy Meredith	Soil Scientist	5/14/12	ACM
Al Mason	Fire/Fuels Specialist	5/11/12	AJM
~~Lisa Rice~~ Cheryl Foster-Curley	Archaeologist	6/4/12	
Leo Kalvels	Engineer	5-14-12	LK
Trish Lindaman	Outdoor Recreation Planner	5-30-12	TL

Ashland Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Proposed activities will follow established rules concerning health and safety, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules.		
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; 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
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The project, by design, is not located in any park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; or national monuments. Projects would not be implemented in prime farmlands, wetlands or ecologically significant or critical areas. The BLM Archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations and any known significant sites or potentially significant (unevaluated) sites located within treatment locations will be flagged for avoidance.		
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Based on past experience from these types of activities, there are no predicted environmental effects from the proposed action that are considered to be highly controversial nor are there unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses. Land use allocations and goals for the affected lands were established and analyzed under the ROD/RMP and the corresponding environmental impact statement.		
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are long-standing practices on BLM-administered lands. Past experience from these types of activities has shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique, or unknown risks.		
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
	Initial RW	

Ashland Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are addressed and authorized under the existing ROD/RMP. This project will implement the decisions made in that land use plan. The proposed activities are widely used on Federal lands throughout Oregon and there is no evidence this type of project would establish a precedent or decision for future actions that would have significant environmental effects.		
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The BLM has conducted these types of activities in the past with no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects.		
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.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The activities described in the CX are considered an exempt undertaking according to the working agreement the Oregon BLM has with SHPO as long as there are no cultural resource concerns within treatment areas. The BLM Archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations and any known significant sites or potentially significant (unevaluated) sites located within treatment locations will be flagged for avoidance.		
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
	Initial RW	
Rationale: Areas proposed for treatment will be reviewed by the BLM botanist, wildlife biologist, and fisheries biologist before any activity begins. Appropriate buffers and project design features will be implemented to avoid adverse effects to threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat.		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
	Initial RW	
Rationale: The proposed activities conform to RMP direction for management of public lands in the Medford District and comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.		
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
	Initial RW	

Ashland Resource Area CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	**Yes**	**No**
Rationale: Similar actions have occurred throughout the District and there is no evidence that this type of project would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on said populations.		
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 130007).		X
Initial RW		
Rationale: The activities described in the CX are considered an exempt undertaking according to the working agreement the Oregon BLM has with SHPO as long as there are no cultural resource concerns within treatment areas. The BLM archaeologist will review individual proposed treatment locations to determine if there is a potential to limit access to or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Work may commence when clearance is given.		
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).		X
Initial RW		
Rationale: The proposed activities outlined in this CX will not contribute to the spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species across Federal lands any faster than if the proposed activities did not occur. Botanical surveys conducted prior to project implementation identify infestations of noxious weeds and nonnative invasive species in or adjacent to proposed units. These infestations will be treated per Medford District's *Integrated Weed Management Plan and Environmental Assessment OR-110-98-14.*		

Ashland Resource Area Categorical Exclusion Reviewers:

Name	Title	Date	Initials
Robyn Wicks	NEPA Coordinator	6/1/12	RW
Armand Rebischke	Botanical	6/4/12	AR
Steve Godwin	Wildlife	6/4/12	SG
Jennifer Smith	Aquatics and Fish Habitat	6/4/12	JS
Amy Meredith	Soil Scientist	6/7/12	AM
Greg Chandler	Fuels Specialist	6/1/12	GC
~~Lisa Rice~~ Cheryl Foster Curley	Archaeologist	6/4/12	CFC
John McNeel	Road Engineer	6/4/12	JM
Dennis Byrd	Recreation Planner	6/4/12	DB
Michael Deming	Hydrology	6/4/12	MD

E. Decision and Rationale

Butte Falls Resource Area Decision
Based on the attached Categorical Exclusion, it is my decision to implement the FY 2012–2014 Silvicultural Practices described in the Proposed Action. In making my decision, I considered the Project Design Features that will be incorporated into the project design.

In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the Proposed Action is in accordance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. Therefore, an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is not needed. It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action in accordance with 43 CFR §5003—Administrative Remedies. If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of this Categorical Exclusion and Decision Record, this decision will become final and may be implemented immediately.

Jon K. Raby, Field Manager
Butte Falls Resource Area

6/11/12
Date

Ashland Resource Area Decision
Based on the attached Categorical Exclusion, it is my decision to implement the FY 2012–2014 Silvicultural Practices described in the Proposed Action. In making my decision, I considered the Project Design Features that will be incorporated into the project design.

In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the Proposed Action is in accordance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. Therefore, an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is not needed. It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action in accordance with 43 CFR §5003—Administrative Remedies. If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of this Categorical Exclusion and Decision Record, this decision will become final and may be implemented immediately.

John Gerritsma, Field Manager
Ashland Resource Area

6/11/12
Date

Administrative Remedies: Notice of the decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion will be posted on the Medford District Web site. The decision described in this document is subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under 43 CFR Part 4.

For more information, contact Doug Stewart, Silviculturist, telephone (541) 618-22648, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, Oregon 97504.