



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Grants Pass Field Office
2164 NE Spalding Avenue
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford

1790 (ORM070)
DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2015-0003-CX

MAR 24 2015

Dear Interested Party,

As the Grants Pass Field Manager, I have signed the Decision Record (DR) for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project Categorical Exclusion (DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2015-0003-CX). This DR is for the salvage harvest of fire-injured and fire-killed trees on 15 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Matrix lands within the Reeves Creek fire perimeter.

On July 28, 2014 a lightning event started the Reeves Creek fire in the Deer Creek Watershed south of the community of Selma, Oregon. The fire burned 187 acres, 79 of those burned acres are on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands. The remaining burned acres are on private land.

Temporary route reconstruction will not occur in this project. Salvage is not proposed in Riparian Reserves. The planning area is outside of any known Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) home ranges, and is not in designated NSO critical habitat.

The CX for the proposed Reeves Creek Salvage Project was made available for a 15-day public review and comment period on February 18, 2015 in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*. BLM responses to public comments are included with the DR. These comments were considered before reaching a final decision for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project.

This is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to persons who believe they will be adversely affected by the decision. In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulations (43 CFR § 5003.2(a)), the decision for this project will not become effective, or be open to formal protest, until the first Notice of Sale appears in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* and the *Medford Mail Tribune* on March 26, 2015.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states, "Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Grants Pass Interagency Office will be accepted. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

The DR is available at <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford/plans/index.php>, the Medford District's internet site. Hard copies of the DR are also available at the Grants Pass Interagency Office, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 7:45 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., closed holidays. For additional information contact Mark Brown, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (541) 471-6505.

Sincerely,



Allen Bollschweiler
(Acting)

Allen Bollschweiler
Field Manager
Grants Pass Field Office

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS FIELD OFFICE
2164 NE Spalding Ave
Grants Pass, OR 97526**

**DECISION RECORD FOR REEVES CREEK SALVAGE PROJECT
DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2015-0003-CX**

I. Introduction

This Decision Record applies to the salvage harvest activities associated with the Reeves Creek Salvage Project. The associated sale consists of 15 acres of post fire salvage. The Reeves Creek Salvage project is Categorical Exclusion (CX) and documented in DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2015-0003-CX. This project will authorize the salvage of fire-killed and fire-injured trees on BLM Matrix lands. For the purpose of this Categorical Exclusion, a fire-injured tree is defined as a Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, or incense cedar with a high probability of mortality. This project excludes salvage within Riparian Reserves is located outside of any known Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) home range, and is not in any designated NSO critical habitat.

The Planning Area is south of the town of Selma. The legal description of the project area is Township 38 South, Range 8 West, Section 23, Willamette Meridian, Josephine County, Oregon.

There will be no temporary route construction associated with this project. The CX analyzed a 0.47 mile temporary route reconstruction that would access the harvest unit using a dozer line that had been built for suppression activities. It has been determined that the 15 acres can be harvested using existing roads. Therefore, the temporary route that was analyzed for reconstruction is not needed and will not be implemented by this decision.

The treatment unit will retain 120 linear feet of logs per acre greater than or equal to 16 inches in diameter and 16 feet long for coarse woody debris. There will be an average of 2 snags per acre retained with the snags primarily focused on the perimeter of the unit due to safety concerns.

II. Public Involvement

A public comment period for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project CX was initiated on February 18, 2015. The CX was mailed to interested parties and property owners adjacent to the planning area. The document was published on the Medford District website the same day (<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford/plans/nepa-details.php>). The CX was available for a 15 day public review and comment period, which ended March 5, 2015. The BLM received 1 comment letter. The comments were considered in making the final decision. The comments and responses are attached to this Decision Record in Appendix 1.

III. Decision and Rationale

The Purpose and Need of the Reeves Creek Salvage Project is to recover the economic value of the fire-killed and fire-injured trees on Matrix lands while balancing the need to minimize environmental effects to resources from project implementation (RMP, p. 72).

Based upon the Reeves Creek Salvage Project CX, it is my decision to authorize the salvage of 15 acres of fire-killed and fire-injured trees as described in the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action has been reviewed by Grants Pass Field Office staff and appropriate Project Design Features, as specified in the CX, will be incorporated into the implementation of the Proposed Action.

Based on the National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusion for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project, I have determined that the Proposed Action involves no significant impact to the environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

IV. Administrative Remedy

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the Authorized Officer, Allen Bollschweiler, within 15 days of the Notice of Sale in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, Grants Pass, Oregon. While similar notices may be published in other newspapers, the date of publication in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* will serve as the effective date of this decision.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states: "Protests shall be filed with the Authorized Officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Grants Pass Field Office, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526 will be accepted.

The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error. 43 CFR§ 5003.3 subsection (c) states: "Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of sale are not timely filed and shall not be considered." Upon timely filing of a protest, the Authorized Officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to them. The Authorized Officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the Authorized Officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision as permitted by regulations at 43 CFR § 5003.3 (f).

This Decision Record for the Reeves Creek CX will be posted on the Medford Districts internet website <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/medford/plans/index.php>.

For additional information concerning this decision or administrative remedies please contact Mark Brown, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (571) 471-6505, 2164 NE Spalding

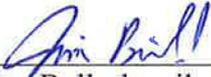
Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526.

V. Implementation Date

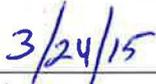
The publication for the first notice of sale will be issued in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* and the *Medford Mail Tribune* on March 26, 2015. If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 pm) within 15 days after publication of the first timber sale ad, this decision will become final.

VI. Decision

I have reviewed the Proposed Action in accordance with the above criteria and have determined that the Proposed Action will not involve any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the actions do not meet any of the criteria for exception (43 CFR § 46.215)

 (ACTING FOR)

Allen Bollschweiler,
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area



Date

Appendix 1
Public Comments for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project Categorical Exclusion
(DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2014-002-CX)

Written comments received in response to the Reeves Creek Fire Salvage Project Categorical Exclusion (CX) were reviewed by the interdisciplinary team and the Authorized Officer. Substantive comments were identified and the BLM has responded to the comments listed below.

Substantive comments are those that (BLM Manual, National Environmental Policy Handbook):

- Provide new information pertaining to the Proposed Action or an alternative;
- Identify a new relevant issue or expand on an existing issue;
- Identify a different way (alternative) to meet the purpose and need;
- Identify a specific flaw in the analysis;
- Ask a specific relevant question that can be meaningfully answered or referenced;
- Identify an additional source of credible research, which if utilized, could result in different effects.

Non-substantive comments are those that:

- Primarily focus on personal values or opinions;
- Simply provide or identify a preference for an alternative considered;
- Restate existing management direction laws or policies that were utilized in the design and analysis of the project (or provide a personal interpretation of such);
- Provide comment that is considered outside of the scope of the analysis (not consistent or in compliance with current laws and policies, is not relevant to the specific project proposal, or is outside of the Responsible Official's decision space);
- Lack of sufficient specificity to support a change in the analysis or permit a meaningful response, or are composed of general or vague statements not supported by real data or research.

Topic: NEPA Authority

Comment

- Salvage logging is not suitable for a CX because it is based on outdated science and outdated thinking about the role of fire and the effects of salvage logging on ecosystems.

Response

- The BLM has developed categorical exclusions for certain Silvicultural activities such as salvage. In developing categorical exclusions, the BLM demonstrated through rulemaking procedures how these actions do not typically result in significant environmental effects and set forth the methodology and criteria used to define the categories of actions.
- The CEQ regulations for NEPA at 40 CFR § 1508.4 states that:
 - *“Categorical Exclusion’ means a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and which have been found to have no such effects in*

procedures adopted by a Federal agency in implementation of these regulations (Sec. 1507.3) and for which, therefore, neither an EA or an EIS is required. Any procedures under this section shall provide for extraordinary circumstances in which a normally excluded action may have a significant environmental effect. “

- The BLM is within legal designation for salvage harvest associated with the CX salvage authority listed in the BLM NEPA handbook at 516 DM 11.9(C)(8).

Comment

- An EIS is needed.

Response

- The BLM has a specially designated CX authority permitting salvage harvest no larger than 250 acres (NEPA handbook at 516 DM 11.9(C)(8)). The Reeves Creek Salvage Project CX/DR authorizes treatment on 15 acres of BLM managed lands and does not exceed the authority provided for salvage operations.

Topic: Snag Retention

Comment

- Retain 30 snags per acre.

Response

- The Reeves Creek Salvage CX/DR proposes to harvest 15 acres (19%) of the BLM managed lands within the Reeves Creek fire perimeter. The remaining 64 acres (81%) of the BLM managed lands will be excluded from harvest and will provide additional snags to the landscape.
- The RMP does not require the retention of the snags at the level the commenter recommended. The Interdisciplinary team (IDT) followed the RMP snag retention standards as a starting point (RMP p. 40):
 - “Retain snags and green trees within a timber harvest unit at level sufficient to support species of cavity nesting birds at 40 percent of potential population levels. Meet the 40 percent minimum through the Matrix with per-acre requirements met on average areas no larger than 40 acres.”
- The snag retention standard for this project based on RMP calculations were 1.5 snags per acre. To better accommodate wildlife habitat characteristics the IDT chose to increase the retention to 2 snags per acre.

Comment

- Retain the largest snags to partially mitigate the temporal gap in snag recruitment.

Response

- The prescription calls for the retention of 2 snags per acre averaged across the unit. The majority of the snags are to be a minimum of 20 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) or greater (CX p. 10).
- Within the Reeves Creek Fire perimeters there are 64 acres of BLM managed land which has been deferred for treatment. Snags in these 64 acres will be retained under this project.

Topic: New Road Construction

Comment

- The commenter urges the BLM to avoid new road construction.

Response

- There is no new road construction proposed for the Reeves Creek Salvage Project. As described in the Decision Record, the originally proposed temporary route reconstruction on the existing dozer line will not be used for this project.

Topic: Diameter Limit

Comment

- Retain all snags greater than 20 inches DBH to help offset potential snag deficiencies in the future.

Response

- The Reeves Creek fire burned 79 acres of BLM managed lands. The final salvage area is 15 acres. This leaves 64 acres of untreated BLM managed lands within the fire perimeter.
- The Reeves Creek prescription requires the retention of 2 snags per acre.
- The RMP does not direct a diameter limit for green or salvage timber sales.

Topic: Watershed Protection

Comment

- The commenter supports road closures to protect watershed values.

Response

- The Purpose and Need of this project is economic recovery on the Matrix land use allocation of fire-killed and fire-injured trees. There are no roads within the project area that have been identified for decommissioning.

Comment

- The commenter supports culvert removal or replacement to provide for passage of fish and woody debris.

Response

- There are no fish bearing streams within the project area. There are no culverts identified within the project area for replacement.

Topic: Ecological Recovery

Comment

- Allow the forest stand to naturally regenerate.

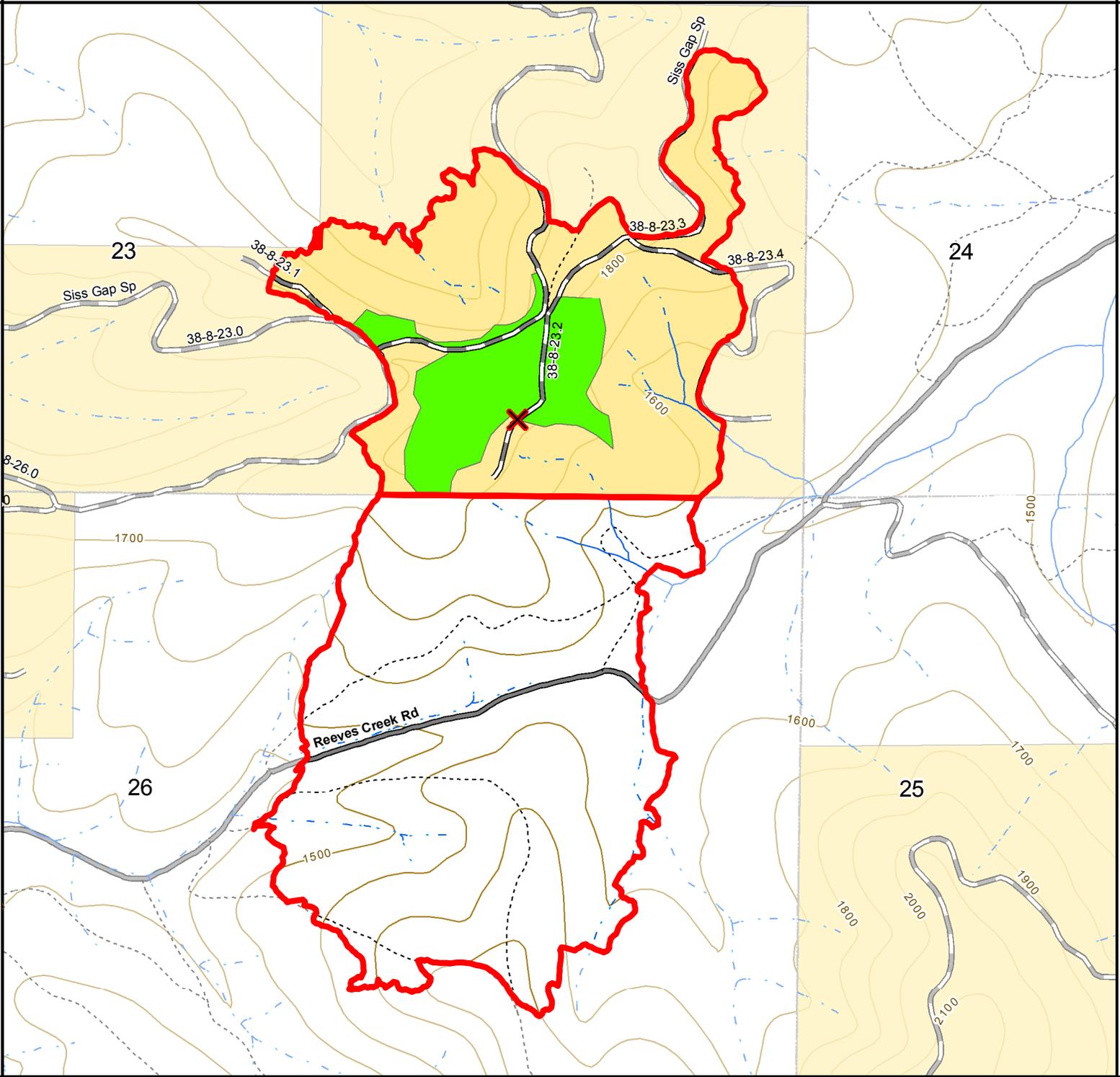
Response

- The BLM is focused on reforestation in the Matrix land use allocation to accelerate post fire stand establishment. Natural regeneration will contribute to the establishment of forest stands within the burned area

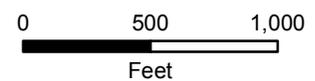
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Reeves Creek Salvage

T38S



-  Treatment Unit
-  Designated Landing
-  Reeves Creek Fire Perimeter
-  Paved Road
-  Natural Surface Road
-  Unknown Surface Road
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Perennial Stream
-  Intermittent Stream



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