

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
DOI-BLM-OR-M080-2009-0002-CX**

NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

A. Background

Proposed Action Title: McGindy Thin

Location of Proposed Action: Medford District, Glendale Resource Area, T31S-R4W-Section 22, 23, & 27

Land Use Allocations: Late Successional Reserves (LSR), Riparian Reserves (RR)

Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action meets the needs identified in the Medford District's Resource Management Plan to manage Late Successional Reserves to promote the development of late successional habitat. The Proposed Action occurs in Critical Habitat Unit (CHU), OR-32 of 1992 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) designation and #14 of the 2008 USFWS designation. The Proposed Action also promotes the development of spotted owl habitat within designated critical habitat.

Critical habitat, as defined in section 3 of the Endangered Species Act, is "the specific areas within the geographic area occupied by a species...on which are found those physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species," (USDI 1992). These features are referred to as the primary constituent elements which support the life requisites of nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal. As the USFWS noted in its Biological Opinion on the NWFP, for a wide-ranging species such as the spotted owl, each Critical Habitat Unit (CHU) has both a local role and a rangewide role (USDI USFWS 1994, p.20). Impacts from proposed harvest therefore are evaluated based upon removal, downgrading, and degradation of suitable (nesting, roosting, foraging) habitat and dispersal habitat, and are evaluated at both the local level and the provincial level.

Much of the federally managed forests within the area surrounding the proposed thinning can be categorized as late-successional habitat with characteristics that support northern spotted owl habitat or progressing towards stands with late-successional characteristics. However, overstocked stands such as the two McGindy Thin units are also present which are not habitat for the owl. The stands are 30-48 year old, planted between 1960 and 1978 after a timber harvest. The two units are predominantly single-storied, small pole size Douglas-fir dominated stands with diameters that generally range from 6-16 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and the average dominant Douglas-fir diameter is estimated at 11 inches dbh. A limited number of second growth conifers greater than 20

inches dbh are present. Close branching of the dense second growth stand is unsuitable for spotted owl flight and are not dispersal habitat for spotted owls.

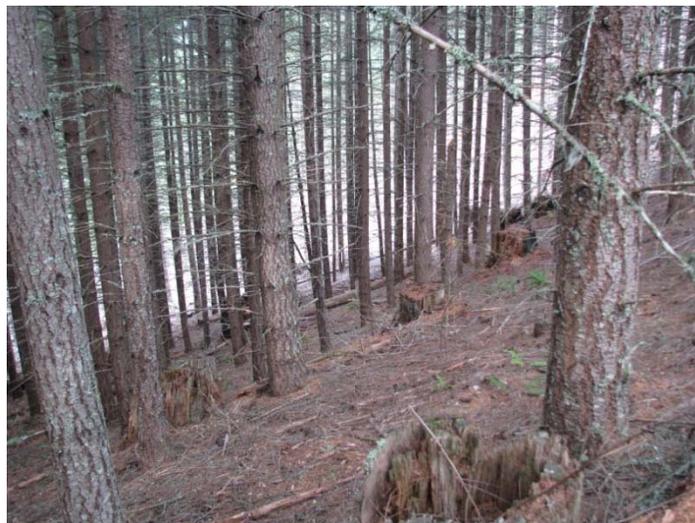
Tree species associated with the plant association/series for the site such as hardwoods are limited. The principal hardwood species, madrone and chinquapin, are declining as the canopy closes and they are shaded out. Conifer crowns are receding as the canopy closes. There is little conifer differentiation within either unit. The stands are generally lacking multiple canopy layers desirable for development of functional late successional habitat for the northern spotted owl. Multiple canopy layering serves as a source of cover and food for spotted owl prey species as well as cover and protection for the owl. Herbaceous groundcover is generally open with patches of salal and sword fern being the primary species. Both units have limited amounts of secondary story undergrowth such as rhododendron, madrone, chinquapin, and evergreen huckleberry.

Recent field review intakes coarse woody debris (CWD) in the Project Area is of smaller diameters. Larger pieces of CWD are present but exist in limited amounts and are generally in the more advanced decay classes (3, 4, and 5).

A small area of laminated root rot has been identified in the northern portion of McGindy #1. In the area above the road in McGindy #2 stem diameters are smaller; there is some ponderosa pine (generally of lower vigor) and a more pronounced shrub layer than in other parts of the proposed project.

With the exception of some areas closest to stream channels, stand conditions in Riparian Reserves are lacking similar late successional characteristics as the uplands.

The following photos depict conditions within areas proposed for commercial density management. As can be seen in the photos, these stands lack multiple canopy layers, there is little understory vegetation, and there are large numbers of relatively closely spaced trees.



McGindy Thin, Unit #1



McGindy Thin, Unit #1



McGindy Thin, Unit #2

Description of Proposed Action: Commercial density management is proposed for the two McGindy units to promote the development of late successional habitat. Critical habitat elements contributing to the development of owl habitat would be retained including: large diameter trees, trees with larger branches and fuller crowns, plant species diversity representative of the plant association/series for the site, structural diversity, large snags and large down logs, on average a closed canopy with a component of canopy gaps, multiple canopy layers, and presence of hardwood species and shrub species, retain some broken topped trees and damaged trees. Treatments would reduce stand densities so that the competition for light, water, nutrients and growing space is decreased on desired leave trees. Long-term stand vigor and growth (forest health) would be promoted.

The proposed treatment would be variable density management, removing predominantly smaller diameter trees (see Table 1 below). Species to be removed from the site would be limited to Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and incense cedar. While most dominant and

larger co-dominant Douglas-fir would be retained, some would be removed to release nearby dominants and co-dominants as well as help to create a second canopy layer. As part of the variable density treatment three small openings (approximately ¼ acre each) would be created within the proposed McGindy Thin units, two openings in Unit 1 and one opening in Unit 2. One of the openings would be centered on the area of laminated root rot. (In this area, as well as throughout the units, trees 20 inches dbh and greater would be retained.) Thinned material would be a commodity by-product. Production of wood volume is not a primary objective.

Table 1. McGindy Thin: Proposed Treatment and Unit History

Township, Range, Section (T-R-S)	Unit #	Acres	Proposed Harvest	Activity Fuel Treatment	Logging System	Ecological Protection Zone (EPZ)	Riparian Reserve Thinning
T31S-R4W-Section 22	1	14	Commercial Density Management	biomass removal; lop & scatter; and hand pile & burn	cable/tractor	No activities proposed within the EPZ or RR for Unit 1.	
T31S-R4W-Sections 22, 23, & 27	2	33	Commercial Density Management	biomass removal; lop & scatter; and hand pile & burn	cable/tractor	0-100 ft EPZ	100-200 ft for the northern and mid-portions* (non-fish bearing intermittent steams) retain 50% canopy closure
						0-125 ft EPZ	125-400 ft for southern most portion* (fish bearing perennial stream) retain 50% canopy closure

* see McGindy Thin map for further details

Upland commercial density management would primarily focus on removing suppressed and intermediate Douglas-fir as well as ponderosa pine of low vigor. Conifers to be retained would be variably spaced so that approximately 90ft² of basal area would remain after thinning in the uplands. Additional trees would be retained in areas of trees with

small diameter crowns to maintain approximately 40% canopy in the uplands areas treated.

Riparian thinning would be applied to Unit 2 to speed development of large trees to provide an eventual source of large woody debris to stream channels and to reduce the potential for uncharacteristic wildfire. Majority of stands within the riparian are dominated by smaller diameter Douglas-fir and pines and are lacking large woody debris, downed logs, and large tree structure, similar to the surrounding upland. As such, the objectives of riparian thinning would be similar to those stated for the LSR with the addition of a sustainable recruitment of large woody debris (LWD).

An Ecological Protection Zone (EPZ) ranging from 100-125 ft from the stream bankfull width (by slope distance) would be applied along streams to protect stream channel structure and water quality. For the McGindy Thin Project, the EPZ is a no treatment buffer. The specific EPZ distance per stream was developed using stated protection criteria¹ for individual elements of the Riparian Reserve including: bankfull and flood stage streambank stability; shade and temperature; surface erosion of streamside slopes; fluvial erosion of the stream channel; soil productivity; habitat for riparian-dependent species; the ability of streams to transmit damage downstream; the role of streams in the distribution of large wood to downstream fish bearing waters; and riparian microclimate. The Ecological Protection Width Needs chart is based on slope and rock type, and takes into account protection of streams from “surface erosion of streamside slopes, fluvial erosion of the stream channel, soil productivity, habitat for riparian-dependent species, the ability of streams to transmit damage downstream, and the role of streams in the distribution of large wood to downstream fish bearing waters”.

Treatments within the Riparian Reserve that are outside the variable width EPZ would be done to promote late successional conditions as discussed above. Canopy closures would remain above 50%, and species diversity would be maintained. Projects within this area would be designed to ensure that habitat conditions for the wildlife and plant species that use this zone are not degraded.

Trees to be removed for harvest would be whole-tree yarded or yarded with tops attached. Slash at landings would be used for biomass or piled and burned. Slash remaining in units after yarding would be treated by lop-and-scatter or handpile-and-burn. A lop-and-scatter treatment would be recommended for logging unit(s) that resemble the fuel loads in the *Low Load Activity Fuel* fire behavior fuel model (SB-1) and a hand pile and burn treatment would be recommended for unit(s) that resemble the *Moderate Load Activity Fuel* model (SB-2).

The purpose of a lop-and-scatter treatment is to arrange the continuity of slash to not exceed two feet in height from the ground vertically and is arranged in a discontinuous pattern horizontally. This arrangement prevents the slash from serving as ladder fuels that

¹ Ecological Protection Width Needs chart (Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision, p. B-15); **Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team** (FEMAT) 1993; and the Northwest Forest Plan Temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Strategies, U.S. Forest Service and BLM, 2005).

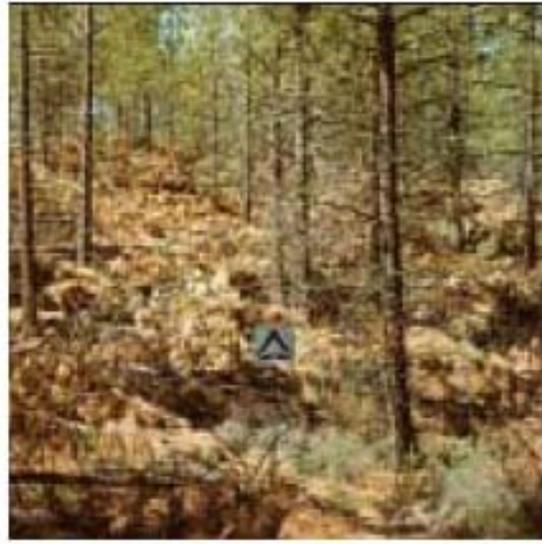
could otherwise enable crown fire development and also slows the rate of spread of fire in the event of an unplanned ignition. The material would decompose faster in this arrangement as well, minimizing the amount of time the slash would be available to influence fire behavior.

A hand pile and burn treatment would be recommended when the amount of slash prevents a discontinuous pattern from being attained as described above. The amount of time the slash would be available to influence fire behavior is therefore minimized through pile burning rather than decomposition.

SB1-Low Load Activity Fuel



SB2-Moderate Load Activity Fuel



Scott, Joe H. and Robert E. Burgan. 2005. *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models*. USDA Forest Service. Rocky Mountain Research Station. General Technical Report RMRS-GTR-153.

Daylighting Road Maintenance

A subset of road maintenance work, referred to as “daylighting” would remove trees within a limited area of the Project Area roadway where trees are limiting sunlight drying out the road surface. Removal of these trees would minimize road surface damage and reduce sediment displacement. To minimize disturbance to cutslopes, shrubs and grass may be cut but the root systems would be retained to maintain cutslope stability.

Daylighting road maintenance would occur where harvest unit boundaries coincide with permanent roads to remove trees up to 10 ft from the center line of the ditch up the cutbank and up to 10 ft from the road shoulder, unless it overlaps with a Riparian Reserve (see Figure 1 for an illustration). Thinning would occur within Riparian Reserves as described on p. 5 of this document.

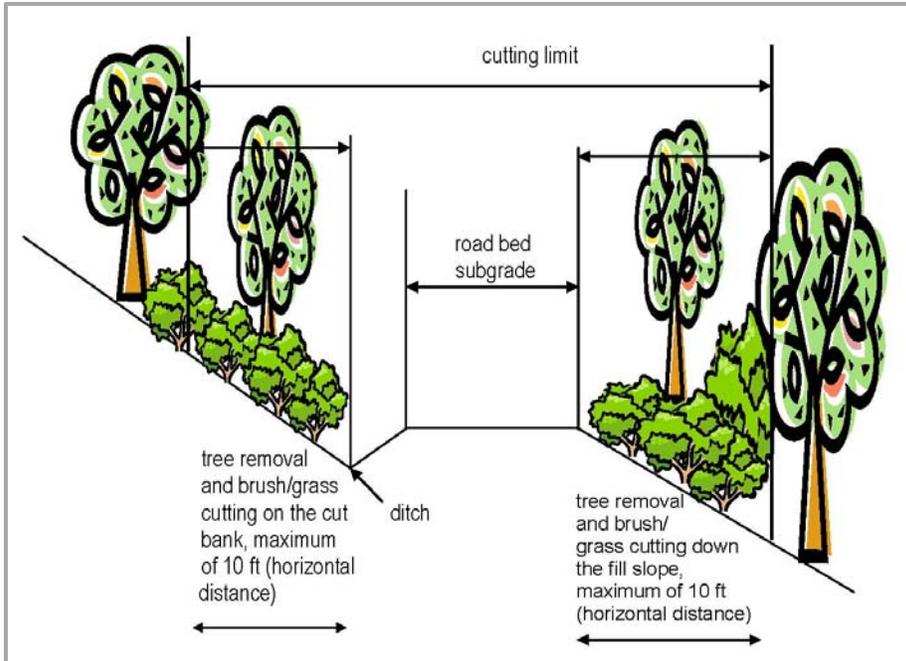


Figure 1. Daylighting Road Maintenance

Road renovation (0.07 miles) is proposed in the southeast portion of Unit 1 to access timber within the unit and would be decommissioned after use.

Table 2. Haul Routes, Road Renovation/Decommission, and Road Maintenance.

Road Number	Length/Control (mi)	Surface Type	Proposed Action	Hauling Timing
31-4-27B	2.34 miles/ BLM	ASC	haul route/maintenance	dry condition haul
31-4-23.2	0.60 miles/ BLM	ASC	haul route/maintenance	dry condition haul
31-4-23.3	0.39 miles/ BLM (Roseburg & Medford)	ASC	haul route/maintenance	dry condition haul
31-5-35N	0.55 miles/ BLM (Roseburg & Medford)	ASC	haul route/maintenance	dry condition haul
(into Unit 1; Block, rip, mulch after use)	0.07 miles	NAT	road renovation and decommission	dry condition haul

Legend

ASC = Aggregate Surface Course
 NAT = Native Surface

Dry condition haul = hauling would not occur during wet road conditions, which are considered to result in: continuous mud splash or tire slide, fines being pumped through road surfacing from the subgrade, road drainage causing a visible increase in stream turbidities, surface rutting, or any condition that would result in being chronically routed into tire tracks or away from designed road drainage during precipitation events.

Best Management Practices

Logging equipment would not leave existing skid routes where the slope is greater than 35% .

No landings would be located within Riparian Reserves.

Refuel equipment a minimum of 150 ft away from streams and other waterbodies. Store equipment containing reportable quantities of toxic fluids outside of Riparian Reserves. Hydraulic fluid and fuel lines would be in proper working condition to minimize leakage into streams.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

- *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* (EIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995);
- *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon* (FSEIS, 2004 and ROD, 2004);
- *Record of Decision To Remove The Survey And Manage Mitigation Measure Standards And Guidelines* (ROD, 2007) and;
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998)* and tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (EIS, 1985).

Parts of the *Upper Cow Creek Watershed Analysis (2005)* and *South Umpqua/Galesville Late Successional Reserve (amended 2004)* are incorporated by reference; the watershed analysis and LSR assessment provide background for the project planning and but are neither NEPA nor decision documents.

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 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 (C)(7)(a) “Harvesting live trees not to exceed 70 acres...Shall not include even-aged regeneration harvests or vegetation type conversions...Such treatment shall be designed to reestablish

vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.”

The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 46.210) provides for a review of the criteria for categorical exclusion to determine if exceptions apply to this proposed action. This categorical exclusion is 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 43 CFR 46.205(c) apply.

I have reviewed the proposed action in accordance with the above criteria and have determined that the proposed action would not involve any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the actions do not meet any of the criteria for exception and is categorically excluded from future environmental review.

D. Agency Consultation

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Consultation for the Endangered Species Act with the USFWS is not necessary. The Proposed Action would have no effect on listed species or their habitat.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Consultation for the Endangered Species Act with the National Marine Fisheries Service is not needed as there are no listed species in the Planning Area. Consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service for habitat listed by the Magnuson Stevens Act is not needed as there is no Essential Fish Habitat in the Planning Area.

Archaeological and Cultural Surveys

Required cultural surveys were completed for the McGindy Thin Project, and no known cultural resource sites were located within the Project Area.

D. Foreseeable Federal Actions within the Upper Cow Creek/Galesville 6th field watershed

Other foreseeable federal actions within the Upper Cow Creek/Galesville sixth-field watershed include the Tiller Ranger District of the Umpqua National Forest (U.S. Forest Service) and South River Resource Area of the Roseburg BLM District. The Tiller Ranger District is developing the Cow Creek Timber Sale and Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project, a watershed-wide fuels reduction project and commercial thin for their managed portion of Upper Cow Creek watershed. The South River Resource Area plans to commercial thin 102 acres as a part of the Shively Whiplash Project via the South Umpqua River Watershed Harvest Plan Environmental Assessment which would haul timber across the road system within the McGindy Thin Project Area, on BLM road #31-4-27.

The South Umpqua River Watershed Harvest Plan Environmental Assessment includes wet and dry season haul across road #31-4-17 within the McGindy Thin Project Area. As noted in the Roseburg District EA, the paved stream crossings on fish-bearing streams, sufficient road surfacing, and Project Design Features would limit the potential sediment delivery from roads on the haul route for delivery into nearby streams. Therefore there would be no effect on coho salmon, coho critical habitat, or essential fish habitat. The Glendale Resource Area of the Medford District concurs with this effects conclusion for Shively Whiplash Project hauling across the Glendale Resource Area.

There are no extraordinary circumstances which would preclude the use of this BLM CX to the McGindy Thin Project as described below.

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR 46.210) 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:

1. Have significant adverse effect on public health or safety. Yes No

Remarks: _____

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. Yes No

Remarks: _____

3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Yes No

Remarks: _____

4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental effects. Yes No

Remarks: _____

5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Yes No

Remarks: _____

6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. **Yes** **No**
Remarks: _____
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. **Yes** **No**
Remarks: _____
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.
 Yes **No**
Remarks: The McGindy Thin Project Area currently does not contain the late successional stand structure to support spotted owl nesting, roosting and foraging habitat, and does not serve as dispersal habitat as the stand conditions are too dense to support travel by flight.
 Due to dry condition haul and road maintenance and the proximity of these roads to stream channels, sediment from hauling and road maintenance activities along these roads would primarily be filtered within the hillslope vegetation and vegetated ditchlines prior to entering stream channels. Sediment would not be of a magnitude that would result in a measureable increase in stream sediment deposition. Therefore, the project is not expected to result in any impact to fish or fish habitat. The McGindy Thin Project would be consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (see p.14-20 of this document).
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or Tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. **Yes** **No**
Remarks: _____
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). **Yes** **No**
Remarks: _____
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). **Yes** **No**
Remarks: _____
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native 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). **Yes** **No**
Remarks: Project area is outside the natural range of Port-Orford-cedar.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
CE#OR118-09-002**

NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DECISION DOCUMENTATION

Description of Action: The Glendale Resource Area is proposing commercial density management approximately 47 acres of managed stands within a Late Successional Reserve in the Upper Cow Creek/Galesville 6th field watershed. All units that would be thinned consist of areas harvested between 1960 and 1978. The objective of the McGindy Thin would be to “promote development of habitat for the northern spotted owl in stands that do not currently meet nesting habitat criteria”. The proposed thinning would be variable density management and would generally remove the smaller trees. Road renovation (0.07 miles) is proposed in the southeast portion of Unit 1 to access timber within the unit and would be decommissioned after use.

Decision and Rationale: I have decided to implement the McGindy Thin. These actions meet the need for action. 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.

This project conforms with the 1995 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995 ROD/RMP) and consistent with the *South Umpqua/Galesville Late Successional Reserve (amended 2004)*.

Administrative Review: 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 timber sales will not become effective, or be open to formal protest, until the Notice of Sale 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 Notice of Sale. 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.

For additional information concerning this decision contact Michelle Calvert, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, telephone (541) 471-6505, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526.

Implementation Date: If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 P.M.) within 15 days after publication of the Notice of Sale, this decision would become final and may be implemented immediately. If a timely protest is received, this decision will be reconsidered in light of the statements of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available and a final decision will be issued which will be implemented in accordance with regulation.

Authorized Official:



Katrina Symons
Field Manager
Glendale Resource Area

Date:

11/24/09

McGINDY THIN PROJECT

DOI-BLM-OR-M080-2009-0002-CX

AQUATIC CONSERVATION STRATEGY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

“The Aquatic Conservation Strategy was developed to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems contained within them on public lands. The strategy would protect salmon and steelhead habitat on federal lands managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management within the range of the Pacific Ocean anadromy” (Medford District 1995 RMP pg. 22).

The four components of the ACS are riparian reserves, key watersheds, watershed analysis, and watershed restoration. The ACS was designed to meet the nine objectives discussed below.

This ACS consistency analysis evaluates McGindy Thin Project EA on BLM land.

Analysis of the Four Components of the ACS:

1. Riparian Reserves: The proposed project is consistent with the actions and directions within Riparian Reserves as described in the Medford District 1995 RMP. The Proposed Action would result in 43 acres of commercial density management to promote forest health and the development of large woody debris (LWD) within Riparian Reserves outside the Ecological Protection Zone (EPZ). Thinning would be designed to expedite the development of late successional, multi-story habitat conditions and restore the species composition and structural diversity of the plant communities, needed to achieve ACS and Riparian Reserve objectives (Medford 1995 RMP, pg 22, pg 26 respectively). Riparian Reserves within the proposed units are currently dominated by smaller diameter stands of Douglas-fir and some hardwoods. Most riparian stands are lacking large wood debris, downed logs, and large tree structure. Thinning of overstocked Riparian Reserves would reduce competition on the retained trees for light, nutrients, water and growing space, allowing trees to develop larger canopies, display better vigor and put on diameter growth faster than if left untreated.

The project is also consistent with the Best Management Practices (BMP) within Appendix D of the Medford 1995 RMP.

2. Key Watershed: The Planning Area is not located in a Key watershed.

3. Watershed Analysis: The Glendale Resource Area completed the Upper Cow Creek Watershed Analysis in 2005. The proposed activity is consistent with the Watershed Analysis.

The Watershed Analysis found that management directions in the Northwest Forest Plan and the 1995 RMP including the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, Best Management Practices, and Riparian Reserve management would be adequate at protecting, maintaining and improving aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

The Upper Cow Creek Watershed Analyses recommended looking at road densities for possible road decommissioning not needed for future management. Roads located in Riparian Reserves or pose substantial sedimentation threat to streams should be a priority consideration for decommissioning, road gating, storm-proofing, and if not necessary for immediate forest management activities could be barricaded to reduce traffic and stream sedimentation. Where roads, landings, and skid trails are no longer necessary they should be decommissioned.

The 0.07 mile of road renovation proposed in the McGindy Thin Project would be decommissioned after use. Two of the project haul routes (31-4-27B and 31-5-35N) exist under reciprocal right-of-way agreements and the BLM cannot decommission roads under these agreements. The 31-4-23.3 and 31-4-23.2 are needed for administrative access and do not pose a substantial sediment threat to streams.

The watershed analysis also recommends stands 40-80 years old should be examined as a high priority for commercial thin treatments.

4. Watershed Restoration: Though the McGindy Thin Project is not a watershed restoration project, it would aid in the improvement of watershed health by commercial density management, road maintenance, and road decommissioning.

Analysis of the McGindy Thin Project EA Action Alternatives' consistency with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives:

The ACS gives direction to maintain and restore ecosystem health at watershed and landscape scales. For the purposes of this analysis the watershed scale will be discussed in terms of site or project scale and will be at the HUC 6 and 7 watersheds. The landscape scale will be at the HUC 5 watershed level.

Appropriate consideration of potential cumulative effects is a critical element in determining a project's consistency with the ACS. The minimal effects at the HUC 7 scale would not reach a magnitude detectable at the HUC 6 or HUC 5 scales. Because there would be no detectable cumulative effects caused by the proposed action, cumulative effects will not be discussed in the individual ACS objectives.

1. Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.

The watershed and landscape-scale features which protect species, populations, and communities dependent on aquatic systems would be maintained and in some cases enhanced in the short term and long term. The distribution, diversity, and complexity of

watershed and landscape-scale features needed for the protection of aquatic systems would be maintained. Proposed activities such as road decommissioning and riparian thinning would restore watershed features in the short and long term.

Riparian Reserves

One key component of watershed and landscape scale features needed for the protection of aquatic systems is Riparian Reserves. Riparian Reserves would be maintained at the site and watershed levels in the short and long term. Riparian vegetation treatments (thinning) would enhance riparian characteristics. Riparian thinning would result in a reduction in stand densities in young dense stands and would allow for the development of late successional riparian characteristics. Some of these characteristics include multi-level canopy cover which helps to maintain cool water temperatures. Late successional characteristics in riparian areas also include downed coarse woody debris and LWD which increases channel complexity. Late successional characteristics in riparian areas also include diverse species composition which provides a variety of chemical and biological inputs to streams. Riparian thinning would also reduce the spread of disease and the risk of a high intensity or severity fire within Riparian Reserves. Such a fire could result in tree mortality and a reduction in shade, which could negatively affect fish habitat by causing an increase in water temperature, a reduction in future recruitment of LWD, an increase in soil erosion and sediment entering streams.

Roads

The project would result in road renovation (0.07 miles) proposed in the southeast portion of Unit 1 to access timber within the unit and would be decommissioned after use. The road is located on a ridgeline and would not lead to stream sedimentation. Due to dry condition haul and road maintenance and the proximity of these roads to stream channels, sediment from hauling and maintenance activities along these roads would primarily be filtered within the hillslope vegetation and vegetated ditchlines prior to entering stream channels. Sediment would not be of a magnitude that would result in a measureable increase in stream sediment deposition. All sediment producing actions would be within the State of Oregon water quality standard of no more than a 10 percent increase in turbidity above and below the action.

Road maintenance would reduce sediment entering stream channels in the short and long term.

This project would not increase the number of permanent roads within this sub-watershed, since permanent road building is not part of the proposed project. No foreseeable permanent road construction is planned on federally managed lands within this sub-watershed.

Peak Flows

The Proposed Action would not affect the timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high and low flows since the McGindy Thin Project would retain canopy closures above 30%. Canopy closures over 30% are not considered to be open space for the purposes of hydrologic functions such as peak flows or water yield increases (Oregon Watershed Assessment Manual, June 1999. Watershed Professional Network Prepared for the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, Salem, Oregon.).

2. Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds. Lateral, longitudinal, and drainage network connections include floodplains, wetlands, upslope areas, headwater tributaries, and intact refugia. These network connections must provide chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.

The spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds would be maintained in the short and long term at the site and landscape scales. Chemically and physically unobstructed routes to areas critical for fulfilling life history requirements of aquatic and riparian-dependent species would be maintained.

3. Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.

The physical integrity of aquatic systems, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations would not be affected at the site or landscape scale in the short or long term. The proposed activities would not manipulate or affect shore lines, banks or bottom configurations.

4. Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems. Water quality must remain within the range that maintains the biological, physical, and chemical integrity of the system and benefits survival, growth, reproduction, and migration of individuals composing aquatic and riparian communities.

Water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic and wetland ecosystems would be maintained. Water quality would remain within the range that maintains biological, physical, and chemical integrity streams.

Due to dry condition haul and road maintenance and the proximity of these roads to stream channels, sediment from hauling and maintenance activities along these roads would primarily be filtered within the hillslope vegetation and vegetated ditchlines prior to entering stream channels. Sediment would not be of a magnitude that would result in a measureable increase in stream sediment deposition. Such increases in turbidity would not measurably alter the biological, physical, or chemical integrity of streams. All sediment producing actions would be within the State of Oregon water quality standard of no more than a 10 percent increase in turbidity above and below the action. Aquatic and riparian dependent species' survival, growth, reproduction, and migration would be maintained.

The road renovation on BLM land (0.7 miles), thinning activity, road maintenance and hauling activity would have no effect on Oregon coast (OC) coho salmon (ESA-Threatened) or coho critical habitat (CCH). The closest coho presence and CCH in Cow Creek is approximately 1.8 miles (9,504 feet) from the proposed project below Galesville Reservoir. Sediment would not be transported to CCH because of the dry condition haul, ridgeline location, EPZs, the proximity of the road to fish habitat and the design features to reduce the transmission of fine sediment. Sediment resulting from the road use would

not be of a magnitude that would result in a visible increase in stream turbidity, or a measurable increase in stream sediment deposition.

5. Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved. Elements of the sediment regime include the timing, volume, rate, and character of sediment input, storage, and transport.

The sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved would be maintained at the site and landscape scales in the short and long terms. Road maintenance would reduce sediment input in the short and long term. Streams within the Planning Area evolved with sediment input. Sediment input can result from natural disturbances such as landslides, slumps, wildfires, bank erosion, and channel scour.

Road Related Activities

Because of PDFs, the amount of sediment entering streams from road related activities would be minimal. Changes in embeddedness, interstitial spaces, and pool depth would not be measurable.

Roads proposed for dry condition haul would result in negligible amounts of sediment entering streams because the roads are either bituminous surface treatment (BST) or crushed aggregate (rocked) or are hydrologically disconnected due to ridgetop location of two units. The roads proposed for dry condition haul could result in sediment entering stream channels, however; negligible changes to stream channels from sediment input would be expected due to sufficient aggregate rock present. Changes in embeddedness, interstitial spaces, and pool depth would not be measurable.

Road maintenance would result in a minimal amount of sediment reaching stream channels. Increased sediment levels from road maintenance would not be detectable above background levels following the first few substantial rain events, therefore sediment input would be short term. Negligible changes to stream channels from sediment input would be expected. Changes in embeddedness, interstitial spaces, and pool depth would not be measurable. Following the first winter and thereafter sediment entering streams would decrease to the point of being negligible.

Road maintenance would generally reduce chronic erosion problems and reduce sediment input to streams. Decommissioning roads would result in long term benefits to streams and fish habitat. Removing access and stabilizing the drainage on the roads would reduce the potential of the roads failing and sediment entering stream channels.

Harvest Activities

All other soil disturbing activities are located outside the EPZ, and would be implemented using BMPs that minimize the quantity and transport of soil erosion. Since the EPZ is designed to filter out sediment produced during upslope activities that are implemented using BMPs, these activities would not result any sediment entering streams.

6. Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing. The timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high, and low flows must be protected.

McGindy Thin would not affect the timing, magnitude, duration, and spatial distribution of peak, high and low flows since the McGindy Thin Project would retain canopy closures above 30%. Canopy closures over 30% are not considered to be open space for the purposes of hydrologic functions such as peak flows or water yield increases (Oregon Watershed Assessment Manual. June 1999. Watershed Professional Network Prepared for the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, Salem, Oregon.).

7. Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.

The timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands would not be affected by the Proposed Action. There are no wetlands, as defined on page 117 of the 1995 RMP, within the Planning Area.

8. Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands to provide adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.

The species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas would be maintained at the site and landscape scales in the short and long term. There are no wetlands, as defined on page 117 of the 1995 RMP, within the Planning Area. Vegetation treatments proposed in the Proposed Action were designed to enhance riparian conditions in the short and long term. Plant communities in riparian areas would be maintained and enhanced through silvicultural prescriptions and no treatment buffers in order to provide for adequate summer and winter thermal regulation, nutrient filtering, appropriate rates of surface erosion, bank erosion, and channel migration and to supply amounts and distributions of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability.

9. Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.

Habitat for riparian-dependent plant, invertebrate and vertebrate species would be maintained at the site and landscape scales. Vegetation treatments proposed were designed to enhance riparian conditions in the short and long term. There would not be a reduction of habitat needed to support riparian dependant species in the short term or long term.

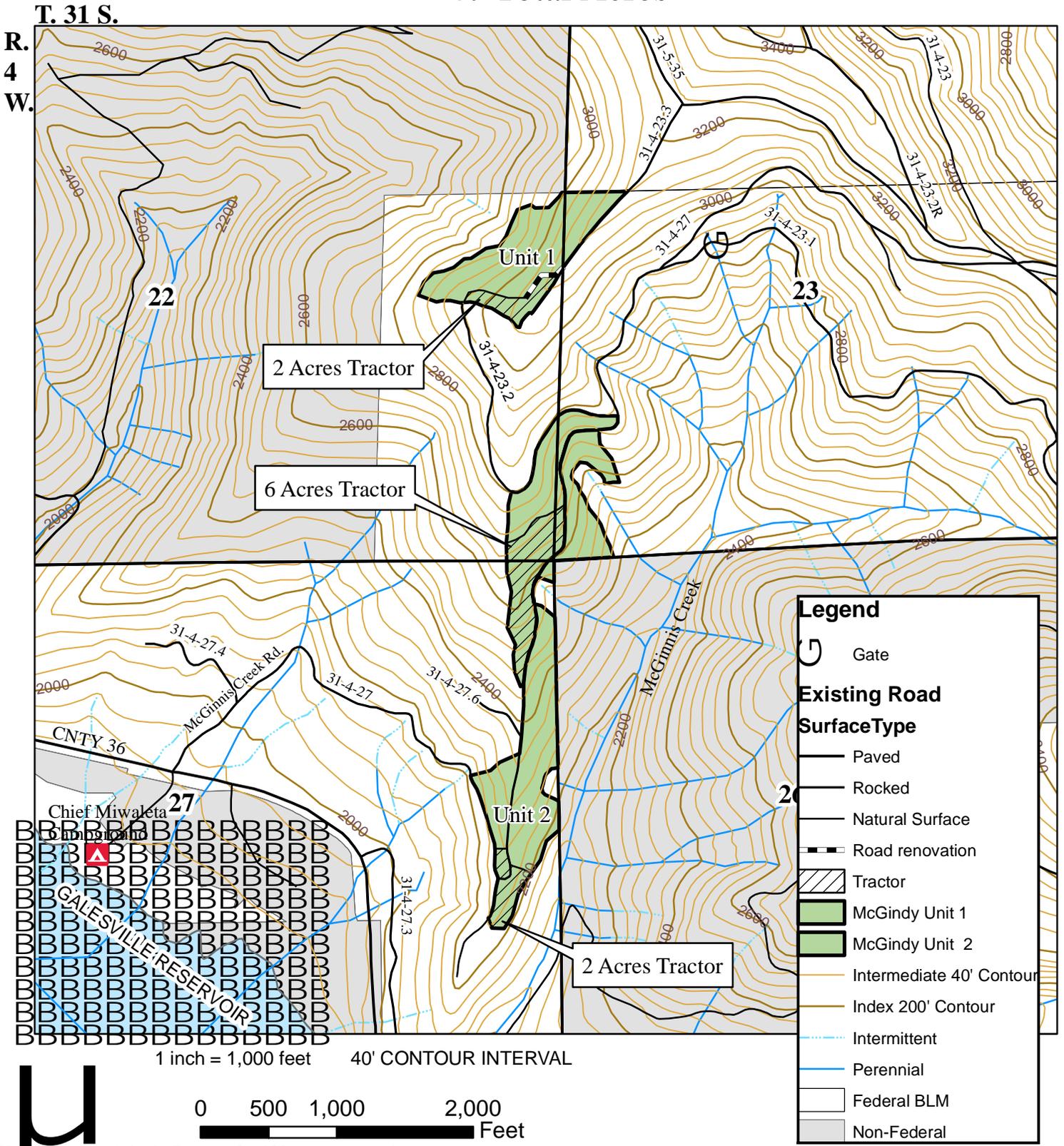
CONCLUSION:

Based on this analysis at both the site and landscape scale of the proposed activities in McGindy Thin, it was determined that the actions are consistent with the nine objectives

and the four components of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. This determination was based on the small spatial and temporal disturbances associated with the Proposed Action.

McGindy Thin Timber Sale

47 Total Acres



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