

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ROSEBURG DISTRICT

**NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW**

**A. Background**

**Proposed Action Title:** 2015 South River Manual Stand Maintenance

**CX#:** DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2015-0003-CX

**BLM Office:** Roseburg District, South River Field Office  
777 NW Garden Valley Blvd  
Roseburg, Oregon, 97471  
Phone: 541-464-4930

**Location of Proposed Action:** Throughout South River Resource Area (see attached map)

**B. Description of Proposed Action**

The South River Field Office proposes to cut shrubs and hardwood trees in previously harvested areas where survival of recently planted conifers is threatened by competing vegetation. Up to 400 acres would be treated entirely in the Wildland Urban Interface (see the attached map). The work would be accomplished between February 26<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, both dates inclusive.

50 ac	General Forest Management Area
50 ac	Late Successional Reserve
100 ac	Connectivity/Diversity Blocks
200 ac	District Defined Reserves

Project specifications for manual maintenance in planted areas would include the following:

- All shrubs and hardwood trees less than 8 inches in diameter and greater than 6 inches in height would be cut.
- Competing vegetation growing within a 20-foot radius of conifer trees would be cut. Hardwood trees and shrubs located outside the 20 foot radius of conifers would be left uncut.
- All broom species would be cut.
- Cut slash within treated areas would be pulled back from the edge of all roads 10 feet.
- Chainsaws would be refueled no closer than 100 feet from streams, lakes and wetlands.

Units containing habitat characteristics and soil types associated with Kincaid's lupine, a threatened species, would be surveyed. If the species is located within the proposed project area recommendations from the botanist would be implemented. No known sites of Kincaid's lupine would be affected by the action.

To avoid potential disturbance to nesting northern spotted owls, operations in occupied habitat or within 65 feet of unsurveyed suitable habitat would occur outside of the critical nesting period between March 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, both dates inclusive. There is no northern spotted owl critical habitat within the project area thus there would be no effect to critical habitat.

The project would occur in unsuitable marbled murrelet habitat outside of marbled murrelet critical habitat. No habitat for Survey and Manage species would be removed or modified.

**C. Land Use Plan Conformance**

Land Use Plan: 1995 Roseburg District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan

The proposed action is in conformance with the ROD/RMP (p. 148) because it specifically provides for stand maintenance and stand protection. Specifically, it states in the decision to apply stand maintenance to promote the survival and establishment of conifers and other vegetation by reducing competition from undesired plant species and apply stand protection to decrease the risk of destruction by wildfire.

**D. 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)(4) *Pre-Commercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices.*

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following table. The proposed action has been reviewed in the following table, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

**E. Categorical Exclusions - Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation**

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> Brushing would occur in rural forested areas well away from communities, and is not expected to have any effect on public safety.		
2.2 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
<b>Rationale:</b> There are no unique geographic characteristics, historical or cultural resources, parks, recreation or refuge lands, etc. that would be affected because proposed treatments do not occur in any of these areas. Brushing would be conducted outside of the nesting season for migratory and land birds, so no direct effects to nesting adult birds, nests and eggs, or fledgling birds would be expected.		

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Past experience has shown that the environmental effects of brushing in young forest stands are not highly controversial. The ROD/RMP authorized this silvicultural activity, and as such, there is no unresolved conflict regarding other uses of these resources.</p>		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Brushing of young forest stands is a long-standing practice that has not been demonstrated to have highly uncertain or potentially significant effects, or involve unique or unknown risks.</p>		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Brushing is addressed in and authorized by the ROD/RMP. As such, this project represents implementation of that land use plan decision, not a decision in principle on future actions. Brushing is a silvicultural practice, the application of which is based on forest stand conditions. It has been widely practiced on BLM and Forest Service lands throughout western Oregon and has not been shown to have potentially significant impacts.</p>		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Brushing would be practiced for the purposes of improving wood quality, improving tree health and vigor. The project is not related, in any way, to other projects with the potential for cumulative effects.</p>		
2.7 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
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Brushing is an activity that does not result in substantial surface disturbance, is not considered likely to pose a risk to any undiscovered cultural or historical resources that might be present, and is exempt from normal inventory requirements, as specified in the 2015 OR BLM-State Historic Preservation Office Protocol.</p>		
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, as an Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Brushing would not affect nesting opportunities for marbled murrelets because the project area is outside the distribution range for the marbled murrelet.</p> <p>Brushing would not affect nesting, roosting and foraging (NRF) opportunities for northern spotted owls as the stands to be treated do not qualify as NRF or dispersal habitat. Brushing would not occur in northern spotted owl critical habitat. Brushing in occupied habitat or within 65 feet of unsurveyed suitable habitat would occur outside of the critical nesting period between March 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, both dates inclusive.</p> <p>Fisher is a proposed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (USDI-FWS 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The project area is not in an area considered occupied by fishers and the stands proposed for treatment do not have the habitat components or structure that is likely to be currently occupied by fishers. There is no, or only a low potential for adverse effects to the species or its habitat as a result of the proposed actions.</p>		

<sup>1</sup> USDI-FWS. 2014. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; threatened species status for west coast distinct population segment of fisher. Federal Register Vol. 79, No. 194. Pp. 60419-60443.

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
<p>Brushing would not affect stream bank stability or result in degradation and erosion of stream banks. Consequently, there is a negligible likelihood of any sedimentation occurring that could degrade water quality. Primary streamside shading would be maintained so that no changes in stream temperatures would occur. No effects to coho salmon, critical habitat for coho salmon, or Essential Fish Habitat for coho and Chinook salmon are expected.</p> <p>Any identified Kincaid's lupine locations would be avoided. Brushing would not negatively affect Kincaid's lupine and would prolong suitable habitat conditions.</p>		
<p>2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.</p>		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed brushing conforms to direction from the Roseburg District ROD/RMP for management of public lands on the Roseburg District. The ROD/RMP complies with all applicable laws, such as the Federal Land Policy Management Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and others.</p>		
<p>2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 2898).</p>		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> No potential impacts have been identified by the Roseburg District BLM, either internally or through public involvement, indicating that brushing would have a disproportionate impact on low-income or minority populations in Douglas County, Oregon.</p>		
<p>2.11 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).</p>		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> No Indian sites of sacred, religious or ceremonial value have been identified in the resource area.</p>		
<p>2.12 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).</p>		X
<p><b>Rationale:</b> There would be no off-road operation of any heavy equipment that would result in soil disturbance or displacement, thereby creating circumstances favorable to establishment of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. Foot traffic associated with forest work crews is not expected to create such conditions.</p>		

**F. Signature:**

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Steven Lydick  
 Field Manager  
 South River Field Office

2/6/15  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**G. Contact Person & Reviewers:**

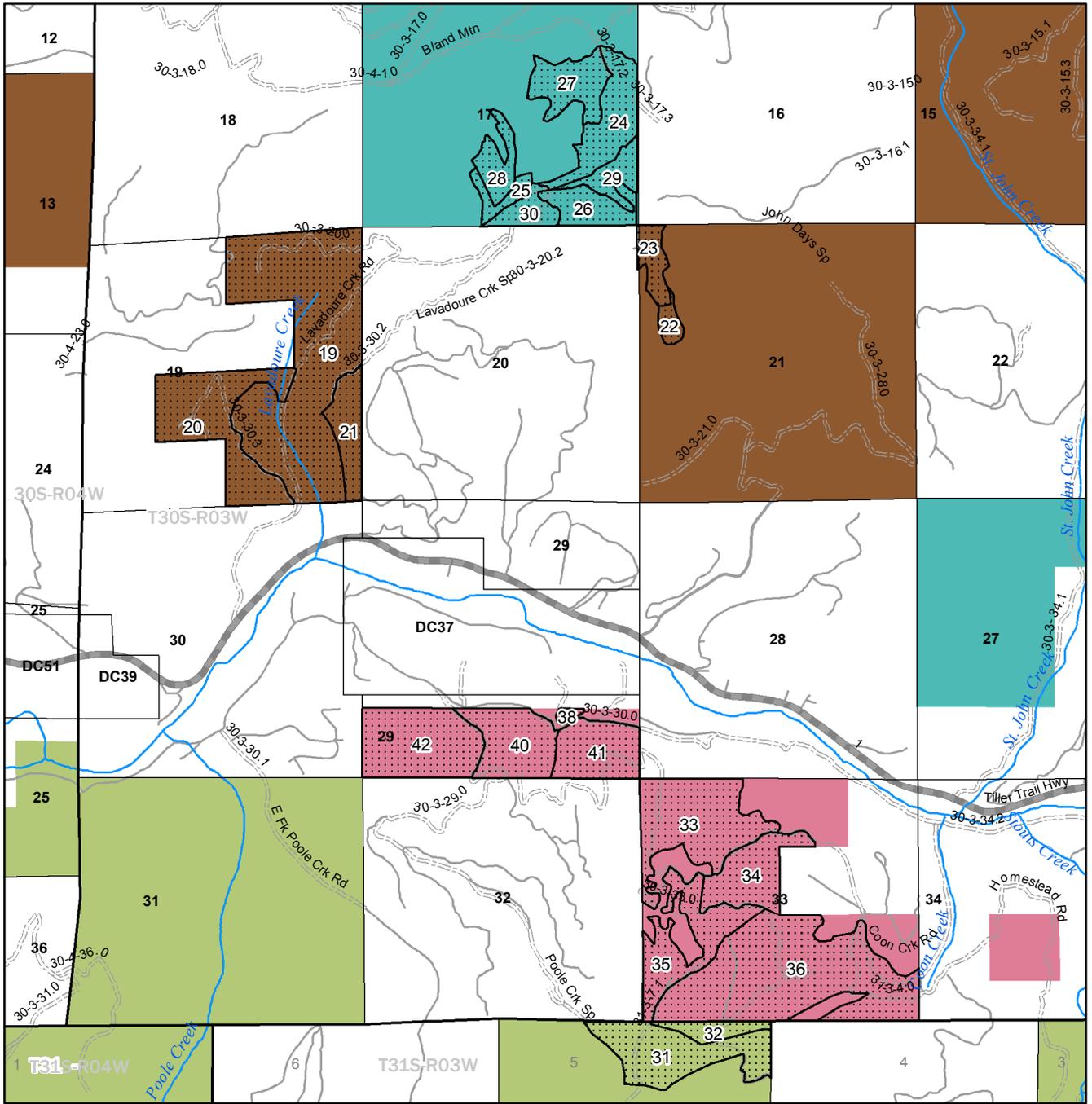
For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact:

Deanna McCrory (South River Forestry Technician)  
 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.  
 Roseburg, OR 97471  
 (541) 464-3334

Reviewers Name	Specialty	Initials	Date
Steve Clark	Fisheries Biologist	SC	2/4/15
Ward Fong	Soil Scientist	Ward Fong	1/29/15
Krisann Kosel	Fire Ecologist	<del>KK</del>	1/29/15
Deanna McCrory	Team Leader	Deanna McCrory	1/30/15
Sidney Post	Hydrologist	SP	2/4/15
Lisa Renan	Wildlife Biologist	Lisa M. Renan	1/27/15
Michelle Roberts	Environmental Coordinator	Michelle Roberts	1/30/15
Aaron Roe	Botanist	AR	1/27/15
<del>Carley Smith</del> Mally Carpenter	Archeologist	Mally Carpenter	1/27/15

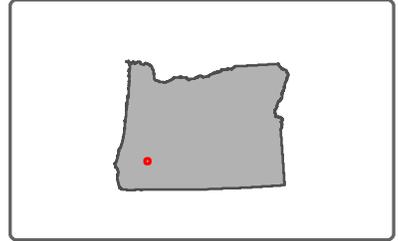
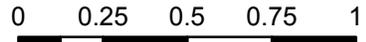
# South River Manual Stand Maintenance

## T.30, R3W, Sec. 17,19,21,29,33 T31S, R3W Sec. 5 & T29S, R2W Sec. 22



- Legend**
- Brushing2015
  - Major Stream
  - Interstate Highway
  - State Highway
  - County Road

- Land Use Allocations**
- BLM Landuse Allocation Type**
- Connectivity
  - District Defined Reserve
  - General Forest Management Area
  - Late Successional Reserve



Date: 2/6/2015  
 Roseburg District  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.  
 Roseburg, Oregon 97471

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ROSEBURG DISTRICT  
SOUTH RIVER RESOURCE UNIT

**DECISION RECORD**

Based upon the attached Categorical Exclusion (DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2015-0003-CX), I have determined that the proposed action involves no significant impacts to the human environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

It is my decision to authorize implementation of a silvicultural prescription calling for the brushing of up to 400 acres in the following land use allocations: 50 acres in the General Forest Management Area, 100 acres in the Connectivity Diversity Blocks, 50 acres in Late Successional Reserve and 200 acres District Designated Reserve. The South River Field Office will cut shrubs and hardwoods on the mapped harvest areas where survival of recently planted conifers is threatened by competing vegetation. Work will be accomplished between February 26<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, both dates inclusive. To avoid potential disturbance to nesting northern spotted owls, operations in occupied habitat or within 65 feet of unsurveyed suitable habitat would occur outside of the critical nesting period between March 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, both dates inclusive.

**Protest Procedures**

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to persons who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. The 15 day protest period will be open for formal protest starting February 11, 2014. To protest a forest management decision, a person must submit a written and signed protest to the South River Field Manager, 777 NW Garden Valley Boulevard, Roseburg, OR 97471 by close of business (4:30 p.m.) on February 25, 2014. 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 further information, contact Steve Lydick, Field Manager, South River Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd. Roseburg, OR 97471, (541) 464-3211.



Steven Lydick  
Field Manager  
South River Field Office

2/6/15  
Date