Preparation Date: August 14, 2008

U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Roseburg BLM District, Oregon

Cedar Shingle
Commercial Thinning & Density Management

Decision Document

SECTION 1 – THE DECISION

Decision

It is my decision to authorize the Cedar Shingle portion of the Proposed Action Alternative as described in the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management Environmental Assessment (EA) in Chapters 1 and 2 (EA #OR-104-07-10; pgs. 1, 4-10). The Project Design Features that will be implemented as part of the Action Alternative are described on pages 12-16 of the Elkhead EA. These project design features have been developed into contract stipulations and will be implemented as part of the timber sale contract.

Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning & Density Management will occur on seven units (approximately 468 acres) of mid-seral, second-growth forest approximately 37-53 years old located in the Elk Creek/Umpqua River 5th Field Watershed in Section 35 of T. 23 S., R. 4 W. and Section 3 of T. 24 S., R. 4 W, Willamette Meridian (see Figures 1 & 2). In addition, approximately 6 acres will be removed for the development of spur roads and rights-of-way.

This project is within the General Forest Management Area, Connectivity/Diversity, and Riparian Reserve Land Use Allocations and will provide approximately 7.471 million board feet (7.471 MMBF) of timber available for auction. Approximately 2.445 million board feet (2.445 MBF) of timber will come from the Riparian Reserve land use allocation. This project is in conformance with management direction from the ROD/RMP.

This decision is subject to administrative remedy under 43 CFR § 5003.2 and 5003.3.

Updated Information

The updated information, described below, has been considered but does not alter the conclusions of the analysis.

1) <u>Unit Configuration</u>:
   Approximately 51 acres have been dropped from the units originally analyzed as Cedar Shingle since the release of the EA due to additional riparian areas and as a result of final mapping and unit layout.

   Within Cedar Shingle, there will be 64 acres of ground-based yarding (formerly 112 acres as proposed in the EA [pg. 8]) and 404 acres of cable yarding (formerly 402 acres as proposed

in the EA [pg. 8]).

The EA (pg. 14) states that for ground-based yarding, harvesters will be limited to slopes less than 45 percent for distances less than 150 feet. This statement is in error and is corrected here to read that harvesters will be limited to distances less than 150 feet on slopes between 35 – 45 percent.

2) Spurs & Roads:
The spurs roads that were proposed in the Elkhead EA to provide access for the Cedar Shingle harvest units have been renumbered. Table 1 (below) provides a cross-reference of the spur numbers as originally identified in the Elkhead EA with the newly designated road numbers.

There will be approximately 0.90 miles of permanent roads constructed (formerly 1.01 miles were proposed in the EA); approximately 0.61 miles of temporary spur roads constructed (formerly 1.42 miles were proposed in the EA); and approximately 1.42 miles of road will be renovated (formerly no roads were proposed for renovation in the EA).

Of the 1.42 miles of renovation that will be done as part of Cedar Shingle, approximately 1.19 miles consists of blading, brushing, and compacting the driving surface of existing roads. The remaining 0.23 miles of Cedar Shingle renovation include placing rock on the existing 23-4-35.4, 23-4-35.3, and 23-4-35.1 roads. The roads that will be renovated (Table 1) were considered as part of the 12.1 miles of existing road that would be maintained for Cedar Shingle in the EA (pg. 11).

Approximately 1.79 miles of roads constructed or renovated in Cedar Shingle will be decommissioned by water-barring, mulching with logging slash where available (or with straw if logging slash is not available), and blocking with trench barriers (Table 1). In addition, approximately 3 miles of compacted skid trails and landings will be subsoiled.

Table 1. Spurs & Roads in Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning & Density Management.

Spur/Road Numbers		**Length** (miles)	**Decision Road** (miles)			
EA #	**Decision #**		Permanent Construction	Temporary Construction	Renovation	Decommission after Harvest*
Spur #1	23-4-35.4	0.11	0	0	0.11	0
Spur #2	Spur #4	0.09	0.09	0	0	0
Spur #4	23-4-35.3	0.16	0.08	0	0.08	0
Spur #5	Spur #3	0.14	0	0	0.14	0.14
Spur #6	23-4-35.5	0.20	0.20	0	0	0
Spur #8	24-4-3.9	0.39	0.39	0	0	0
Spur #9	Spur #1	0.10	0	0	0.10	0.10
Spur #10	*Will not be built*	0	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*
Spur #11	*Will not be built*	0	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*
Spur #12	*Will not be built*	0	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*
Spur #13	24-4-3.11	0.14	0.14	0	0	0
Spur #15	*Will not be built*	0	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*	*Will not be built*
Spur #16	24-4-3.10	0.54	0	0.54	0	0.54
Spur #17	Spur #2	0.07	0	0.07	0	0.07
Additional	23-4-34.0	0.01	0	0	0.01	0

Spur/Road Numbers		Length (miles)	Decision Road (miles)			
EA #	**Decision #**		Permanent Construction	Temporary Construction	Renovation	Decommission after Harvest*
Roads	23-4-35.1	0.04	0	0	0.04	0
	23-4-35.21	0.17	0	0	0.17	0.17
	24-4-3.2	0.59	0	0	0.59	0.59
	23-4-28.0G	0.18	0	0	0.18	0.18
Total		**2.93**	**0.90**	**0.61**	**1.42**	**1.79**

* Decommissioning will include water-barring, mulching with logging slash where available (or with straw if logging slash is not available), and blocking with trench barriers.

3) Oregon Coast Coho Consultation:
Previously in the EA (pg. 47), the Cedar Shingle timber sale was found to be a "*not likely to adversely affect*" on the Oregon Coast coho salmon and its critical habitat. It is one portion of the gravel-surfaced haul route along BLM road 23-4-28.0 that was determined by the fisheries staff to have sediment delivery potential to the mainstem of Elk Creek. This sediment delivery potential would be an indirect effect of winter haul. It was this portion of the 23-4-28.0 road that led to the "*not likely to adversely affect*" determination. A Biological Analysis (BA) was submitted to NOAA Fisheries at the Level One meeting in May, 2008.

However, upon further review the sediment delivery potential of the 23-4-28.0 road would be eliminated by use of fiber filtration tubes installed at this location. These tubes are comprised of very fine wood fibers and natural flocculants that bind to sediment particles and filter them out as water passes through the filtration tube. Inclusion of the fiber filtration tubes as a project design feature in conjunction with contract administration that only allows haul during periods of dry weather, would eliminate the sediment delivery mechanism identified at this location.

Therefore, the fisheries staff has determined that Cedar Shingle, with the additional project design feature using fiber filtration tubes, would have "*no effect*" on Oregon Coast coho salmon and its critical habitat. In light of this determination, those portions of the Biological Analysis pertaining to Cedar Shingle were excluded from further consultation with NOAA.

Compliance and Monitoring

Compliance with this decision will be ensured by frequent on the ground inspections by the Authorized Officer. Monitoring will be conducted as per the direction given in Appendix I of the RMP (pgs. 189-209).

SECTION 2 – THE DECISION RATIONALE

The Project Design Features described in the EA (pgs. 12-16) will minimize soil compaction, limit erosion, protect slope stability, protect wildlife habitat, protect fish habitat, protect air and water quality, as well as protect other identified resource values. I have reviewed the resource information contained in the EA and the updated information presented in this decision. This decision recognizes that impacts could occur to some of these resources; however, the impacts to resource values will not exceed those identified in the *Final - Roseburg District Proposed*

Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/EIS). This decision provides timber commodities resulting from silvicultural treatments whose effects to the environment are within those anticipated and already analyzed in the PRMP/EIS.

Chapter 2 of the EA describes two alternatives: a "No Action" alternative and a "Proposed Action" alternative. The No Action alternative was not selected because it did not meet the objectives from pages 1-2 of the EA to:

- comply with Section I of the O&C Act,
- contribute timber volume towards a sustainable supply of timber,
- contribute to the Roseburg District's annual allowable sale quantity of 45 MMBF,
- manage General Forest Management Area to assure a high level of sustained timber productivity,
- manage Connectivity/Diversity to usually assure high levels of volume productivity and to perform commercial thinning on stands less than 120 years of age, or
- perform density management within the Riparian Reserve to help forest stands develop late-successional characteristics and attain forest conditions that contribute to the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

SECTION 3 – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The BLM solicited comments from affected tribal governments, adjacent landowners, affected State and local government agencies, and the general public on the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management EA, which included the Cedar Shingle project, during a 30-day public comment period (March 18 – April 17, 2008). Two comments were received as a result of the public comment period.

Upon reviewing the comments, the following topics warrant additional clarification specific to the Cedar Shingle project: (1) roads and (2) ground-based yarding on slopes.

1) <u>Roads</u>

   A comment questioned the need for the amount of spur roads as proposed in the EA, why Spur #13 [now the 24-4-3.11 road] was proposed as a permanent road and why it is necessary, and suggested eliminating or closing the 24-4-3.2 road.

   The interdisciplinary team developed a proposed harvest plan using the existing road network to the greatest degree practical while still meeting the stated objectives and decision factors (EA, pgs. 2-3). Spur road impacts were minimized to the extent practicable while maintaining the ability to successfully implement the silvicultural prescription in a cost efficient manner while providing for the protection of soil and water quality, and meeting other land use objectives.

   Spur #13 [now the 24-4-3.11 road] will be constructed as a permanent road because it is anticipated that it will be used again for future stand treatments and harvest. In addition, the road is needed in that location to provide satisfactory deflection for the cable-yarding system; the existing 24-4-3.8 road to the northeast would not provide adequate deflection for cable-yarding and would lead to soil compaction and erosion.

The 24-4-3.2 road will be renovated and then decommissioned by, water-barring, mulching with logging slash where available (or with straw if logging slash is not available), and blocking with trench barriers after harvest operations are completed.

2) Ground-based Yarding on Slopes

A comment stated "[g]round-based operations are being allowed on slopes up to 60% steep for 150-feet in length. The EA failed to describe how many of these 150', 60% stretches would be allowed…"

On page 30 of the Elkhead EA, the EA states that "[t]here are short slope pitches of 35 to 60 percent up to 150 feet in length where ground-based operations are designated." Approximately 1 percent (2 acres) of the designated ground-based harvest area have slopes up to 60 percent, but ground-based equipment will not actually travel across the steeper slopes (i.e. 45 – 60 percent slope). The PDFs (EA, pg. 14) limit skid and forwarder trails to slopes less than 35 percent.

The EA (pg. 14) states that harvesters will be limited to slopes less than 45 percent for distances less than 150 feet. This statement is in error and is corrected here to read that harvesters will be limited to distances less than 150 feet on slopes between 35 – 45 percent.

Trees in the designated ground-based yarding areas with slopes between 45 – 60 percent will be yarded by equipment operating on gentler ground (i.e. less than 35 percent) and "reaching in". Trees in these areas can be reached by a 20 foot harvester boom reaching up or down the slope as the harvester itself remains on less than 35 percent slopes. Where harvester-forwarder or skidder operations are used, there is the option of hand-falling the tree to lead where the harvester boom reaches for the tree bole or a line is pulled to the tree bole from a skidder. By hand-falling to lead, harvester-forwarders or skidders will avoid operating on slopes greater than 45 percent and will generally not operate on slopes greater than 35 percent.

The remaining comments did not raise substantive issues that would influence my selection of the Action Alternative for Cedar Shingle based on the Elkhead Commercial Thinning & Density Management EA.

SECTION 4 – PROTEST PROCEDURES

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 § 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer [Marci L. Todd] within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states that: "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 or facsimile protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Roseburg District Office will be accepted. The protest must

clearly and concisely state the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

Protests received more than 15 days after the first publication of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement are not timely filed and shall not be considered. Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to her. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of her review, serve her decision in writing to the protesting party. Upon denial of a protest the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision.

For further information, contact Marci L. Todd, Field Manager, Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District, Bureau of Land Management, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd; Roseburg, OR. 97470, (541) 440-4931.

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Marci L. Todd, Field Manager Date
Swiftwater Field Office

Figure 1. Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning & Density Management: Units 35A and 35B.

Township 23S, Range 04W, Section 35; Willamette Meridian.

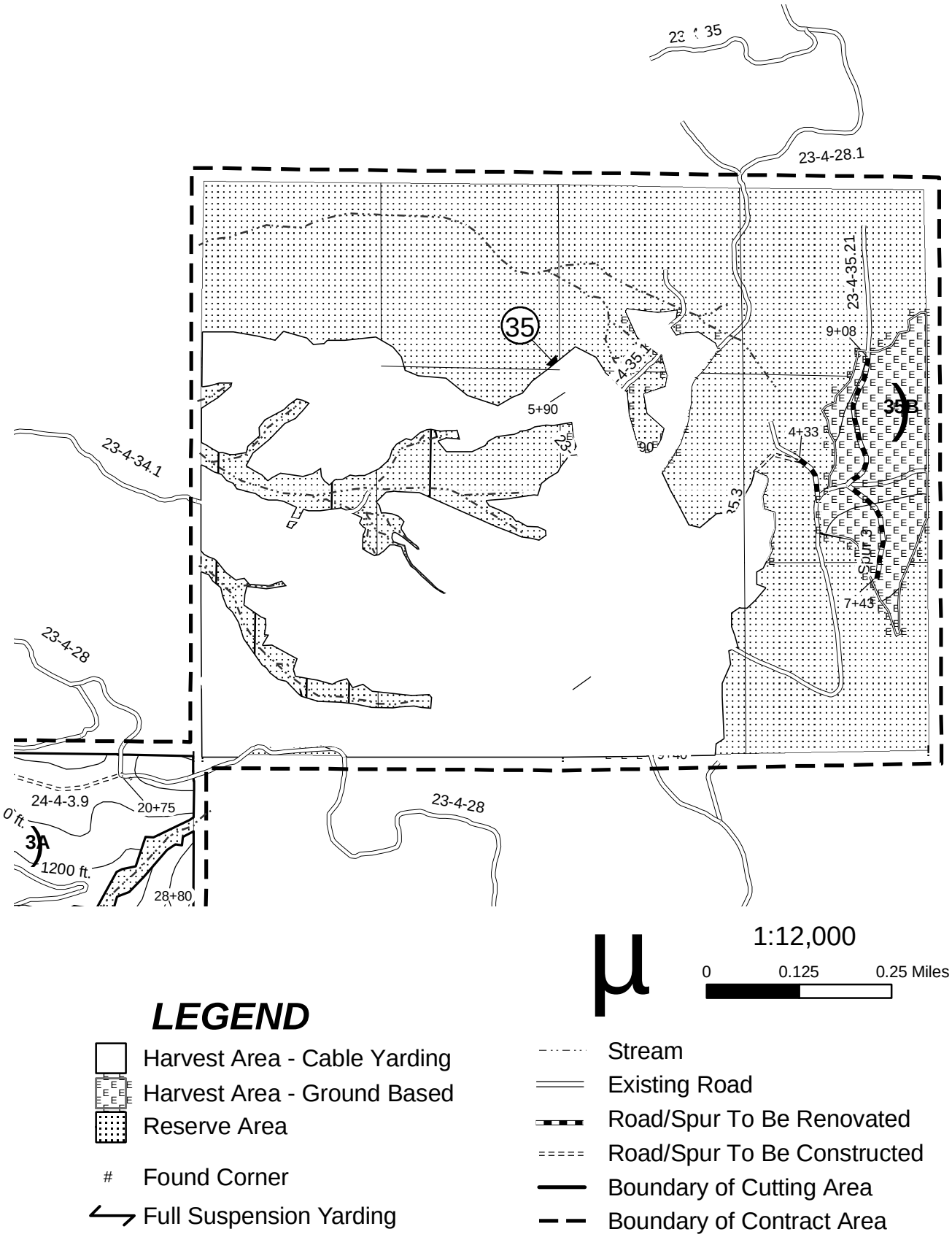
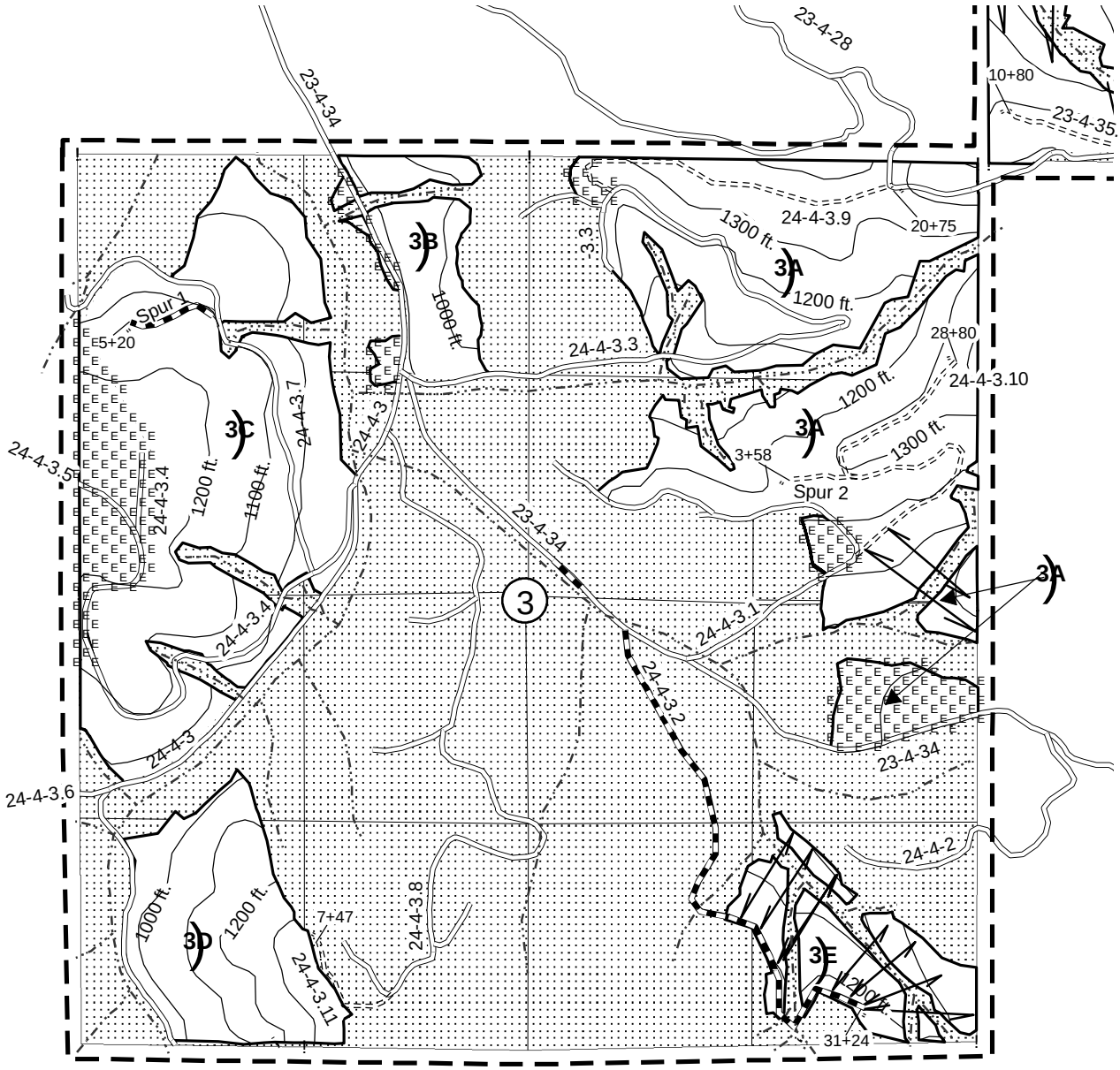


Figure 2. Cedar Shingle Commercial Thinning & Density Management: Units 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, and 3E.

Township 24S, Range 04W, Section 03; Willamette Meridian.



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0 0.125 0.25 Miles

LEGEND

- Harvest Area - Cable Yarding
- Harvest Area - Ground Based
- Reserve Area
- # Found Corner
- Full Suspension Yarding
- Stream
- Existing Road
- Road/Spur To Be Renovated
- Road/Spur To Be Constructed
- Boundary of Cutting Area
- Boundary of Contract Area