

Curtis Creek Habitat Improvement II Decision Document

Roseburg District Aquatic Restoration Environmental Assessment (EA # OR 103-08-09)

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the commitment of Federal dollars for the Curtis Creek Habitat Improvement II project. The project was recommended for partial funding under Title II of the Secure Rule Schools and Community Self-Determination Act by the Roseburg District Resource Advisory Committee. This project will improve aquatic habitat in the Elk Creek watershed in which the Oregon Coast steelhead trout and the Federally-threatened Oregon Coast coho salmon are present. Both species are known to utilize reaches of Curtis Creek for spawning and rearing, including approximately one mile of stream on BLM-administered lands upstream of the project area. Project design and implementation will be undertaken by the Elk Creek Watershed Council in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The proponent proposes to place approximately twenty-five (25) large wood structures and boulder weirs along approximately one mile of Curtis Creek, on privately-owned lands in Section 19, T. 22 S., R. 4 W., Willamette Meridian. Curtis Creek is located in the Elk Creek watershed, designated as a Tier 1 Key Watershed by the Roseburg District BLM under the 1995 Roseburg District Resource Management Plan, which is tiered to the Northwest Forest Plan.

An excavator will be used to construct the weirs and place large wood. Access through riparian areas will be limited to specified locations and in-channel operations will only occur when absolutely necessary or on bedrock channels to minimize damage.

The following project design features will be implemented:

- All equipment will be pressure washed or steam cleaned prior to mobilization in and out of the project area to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed or other propagative materials. Any equipment removed during the life of the contract will be re-cleaned before being returned to the project area.
- The contractor will have a spill containment kit available in the event of any inadvertent spillage of petroleum products.
- Upon completion of the project excavator trails will be scarified, seeded and mulched.

The proposed action complies with the 1995 ROD/RMP because it is specifically provided for in the following decision:

- “Coordinate with other agencies and groups in the management of species across the landscape. Coordination will be accomplished through conservation plans or similar agreements which identify actions to conserve single or multiple species and/or habitats.” (p. 42)

Rationale for the Decision:

Projects of this nature were described under Alternative Two, the Proposed Action, in the Roseburg District Aquatic Restoration EA (p. 10). Effects would be consistent with those described in the EA (pp. 27-28). Implementation will aid in meeting the objectives of creating deep pools with ample hiding cover and holding gravels for spawning (EA, p. 5). Alternative One, the “No Action” alternative, would not meet these objectives.

Oregon Coast coho salmon

Curtis Creek is designated as critical habitat and Essential Fish Habitat for Oregon Coast coho salmon. Potential effects from placement of logs for instream habitat are primarily associated with sediment generated by stream bank and stream channel disturbance.

Actions of this nature were programmatically consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service and are addressed and authorized in *Reinitiation of the Endangered Species Act Section 7 Formal Programmatic Conference and Biological Opinion and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for Aquatic Restoration Activities in the States of Oregon and Washington* (ARBO II), dated April 25, 2013.

Survey and Manage

The project area is located entirely on privately-owned lands and, as such, is not subject to the terms of the *2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines*.

Northern spotted owl

The project will occur within the range of the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). There are no disruption concerns as there are no known sites for the species within 0.25 miles of the project area, and the project will not occur within suitable habitat or critical habitat.

Marbled murrelet

The project will occur within the range of the marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*). There are no disruption concerns as there are no known sites for the species within 0.25 miles of the project area, and the project will not occur within suitable habitat or critical habitat.

Botany

The instream project is located within the respective distribution ranges of the Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus* var. *kincaidii*) and the rough popcornflower (*Plagiobothrys hirtus*). There are no known extant sites for either the Kincaid's lupine or the rough popcornflower, within the project area. There is no suitable habitat for Kincaid's lupine or rough popcorn flower within the project area. Consequently, the project would have no effect on either species.

Cultural/Historical Resources

Bureau of Land Management personnel conducted cultural resource surveys on June 26, 2014 in accordance with Appendix A of the 1998 protocol with the State of Oregon (Survey Techniques for Densely Vegetated Areas in Western Oregon).

The BLM has completed its Section 106 responsibilities for this project. A Project Tracking Form (CRS No. SW 1406) has been prepared and is on file.

Public Involvement & Response to Comment:

An interdisciplinary team began analysis for the Roseburg District Aquatic Restoration EA in the autumn of 2008, and the public was notified of initiation of the environmental assessment in the Winter 2008 Roseburg District Quarterly Planning Update.

A thirty-day period for public review and comment was provided upon completion of the environmental assessment (August 4, 2009 through September 3, 2009), consistent with BLM policy/practice to provide the public a review opportunity prior to issuance of any decision(s). Notification was made to state and Federal resource management and regulatory agencies. Local tribal and county government, trade groups and other interested parties were also notified. No comments on the environmental assessment were received.

Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with the 1995 ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 84, & 195-198), with emphasis on assessing the effects of the restoration activities on the following resources: Water and Soils; and Fish Habitat.

Administrative Remedies:

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, Max Yager, within 15 days of the publication of the legal notice of availability of the decision on August 12, 2014, in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

