

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ROSEBURG DISTRICT  
**NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW**

**Project Title:** Rabbit Mountain Fire Suppression-Created Log Removal

**BLM Office:** Roseburg District, South River Field Office   **CX#:** DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2013-0008-CX  
777 NW Garden Valley Blvd  
Roseburg, Oregon, 97471  
Phone: 541-464-4930

## **A. Background**

**Location of Proposed Action:** South River Resource Area; Sections 9, 15, 17 and 21, T. 31 S., R. 8 W. and Section 11, T. 32 S., R. 7 W., Willamette Meridian (W.M.); see attached map.

### **Description of Proposed Action**

During fire suppression activities, existing roads were day-lighted to provide fire suppression control lines, and trees were felled to facilitate tractor fire trail construction. To avoid creating fuel accumulations near active fire, many of the felled trees, approximately 230 thousand board feet, were decked and individually placed adjacent to existing roads during fire mop-up and rehabilitation actions. The need exists to return the BLM infrastructure to the pre-suppression status to reduce existing and future threats to this infrastructure and remove hazards to public and reciprocal right users. The purpose of the project is to remove the fire suppression-created logs located within 50 feet of the center line of existing roads. Specifically, logs are located along BLM Roads 31-8-3.0, 31-8-8.1, 31-8-9.1, 31-8-17.1, and 32-7-12.2 or private roads on BLM land (see attached map). Logs are also present on the fill slope of Michigan Springs helipond, which threatens the integrity of the helipond fill slope and drain pipe during high precipitation events.

Any additional log processing (e.g. limbing and bucking to desired lengths) would be accomplished using chainsaws or tracked processing equipment. Log removal would be accomplished using either a self-loading log truck or tracked/rubber tire loader. There would be no ground or habitat disturbance as there would be no road construction or log skidding, and all equipment operations would occur on existing roads. No project activities would occur between March 1 and September 15, both days inclusive, which is outside of the critical marbled murrelet nesting period as well as outside of the northern spotted owl nest, fledgling and dispersal period.

The project area is within the Zone 2 Seasonal Restriction Corridor for the **marbled murrelet**. As the action would be limited to removal of logs generated during fire suppression actions, no suitable marbled murrelet habitat would be modified or removed.

No activity is proposed within **northern spotted owl** nest patches or core areas. Logs located in T. 31 S. R. 8 W., W.M. are within the home range of six overlapping northern spotted owl sites (Dice Creek, Upper Dice Creek, Snowy Dutchman, Darby Creek, Quartzite Creek, and Haystack). Logs in Section 11, T. 32 S., R 7 W., W.M. are located within four overlapping northern spotted owl home ranges (Buck Creek, Upper Buck Creek, Dads Creek North, and Martin II). All logs, with the exception of those in Section 9, are located in northern spotted owl critical habitat. As the action would be limited to removal of logs generated during fire suppression actions, no suitable habitat would be modified or removed.

Prior to mobilization into the contract area, logging equipment would be steam cleaned or pressure washed to remove soil and other materials that could transport weed seed, root fragments, or other propagative materials. If equipment is removed from the contract area during the life of the contract, it must be re-cleaned and re-inspected prior to re-entry into the project area.

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is subject to and in conformance with the *Roseburg District Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (ROD/RMP)*, approved June 2, 1995, because management actions/direction in the ROD/RMP Decision state:

*“Remove snags and logs to reduce hazards to humans along roads and trails and in or adjacent to recreation sites.”* (p. 30)

## 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) (2) – *“Sale and removal of individual trees or small groups of trees which are dead, diseased, injured, or which constitute a safety hazard, and where access for the removal requires no more than maintenance to existing roads.”*

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 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

## D. Categorical Exclusions - Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> Log removal would occur in rural forested areas well away from communities and presents no public health or safety hazard.		
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. No direct effects to nesting adult birds, nests and eggs, or fledgling birds would be expected from the removal of decked and individually placed logs as there would be no modification or removal of forest habitat associated the log removal.		
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
<b>Rationale:</b> The environmental effects of removing decked and individually placed logs adjacent to existing roads are not highly controversial. The ROD/RMP (pp. 30 and 74) authorizes this activity, and as such, there is no unresolved conflict regarding other uses of these resources.		

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> Removing logs along existing roads is a long-standing practice that has not been demonstrated to have highly uncertain or potentially significant effects, or involve unique or unknown risks.		
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> The removal of decked and individual logs is addressed in and authorized by the ROD/RMP (pp. 30). As such, this project represents implementation of the land use plan decision, not a decision in principle on future actions. Removing logs along existing roads has been widely practiced on BLM and Forest Service lands throughout western Oregon and has not been shown to have potentially significant impacts.		
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> The project would have no direct or indirect effects; therefore there would be no cumulative effects. The project is not related to other projects with the potential for cumulative effects.		
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
<b>Rationale:</b> The removal of the decked and individual logs would not affect any known cultural resources. The BLM has met its Section 106 responsibilities under the 2012 National Programmatic Agreement and Appendix A of the 1998 Oregon Protocol. If any objects of cultural value (e.g. historic or prehistoric ruins, graves, fossils, or artifacts) are found during the implementation of the proposed action, operations would be suspended until the site has been evaluated to determine the appropriate mitigation action.		
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
<b>Rationale:</b> Removing fire-suppression created logs would not affect nesting opportunities for the marbled murrelet or affect nesting, roosting, and foraging opportunities for the northern spotted owl. Log removal would occur outside of the nesting season for both species so that potential disruption is avoided. The logs were decked or individually placed along existing roads, which are well removed from any stream courses. Removal would not affect stream bank stability or result in degradation and erosion of stream banks. Consequently, there is no likelihood of any sedimentation occurring that could degrade water quality. Removal of the logs would have no effect on streamside shading, and consequently no effect on stream temperatures. There would be no effects to Oregon Coast coho salmon, critical habitat designated for Oregon Coast coho salmon, or Essential Fish Habitat designated for Oregon Coast coho and Chinook salmon. There are no known special status plant or fungi sites within or adjacent to the project locations. The nearest population of the federally threatened Kincaid's lupine is approximately 13 air miles northeast of the nearest log location. It is unlikely that Kincaid's lupine occurs in these locations and, if it did, the greatest impact to the species would be logs stacked upon occupied sites. Removal of the logs would not further impact any undocumented special status plant or fungi sites.		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
<b>Rationale:</b> The project 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.		

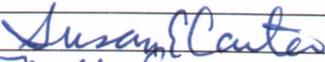
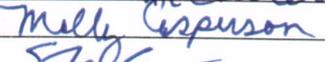
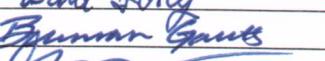
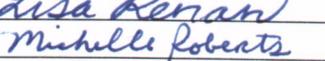
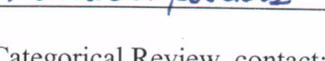
THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 2898).		X
<b>Rationale:</b> No potential impacts have been identified by the Roseburg District BLM, either internally or through public involvement in BLM project planning over the years which would indicate that the removal of the logs would have a disproportionate impact on low-income or minority populations in Douglas County, Oregon.		
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).		X
<b>Rationale:</b> No sites of sacred, religious or ceremonial value have been identified in the resource area.		
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).		X
<b>Rationale:</b> Equipment used for log removal will be required to undergo steam cleaning or pressure washing prior to move-in in order to remove any soil that may be contaminated with weed seed or other propagules, and reduce the risk of introducing noxious weeds into the area.		

**E. Signature:**

  
 Steven Lydick  
 Field Manager  
 South River Field Office

10/23/13  
 Date

**F. Reviewers and Contact Person**

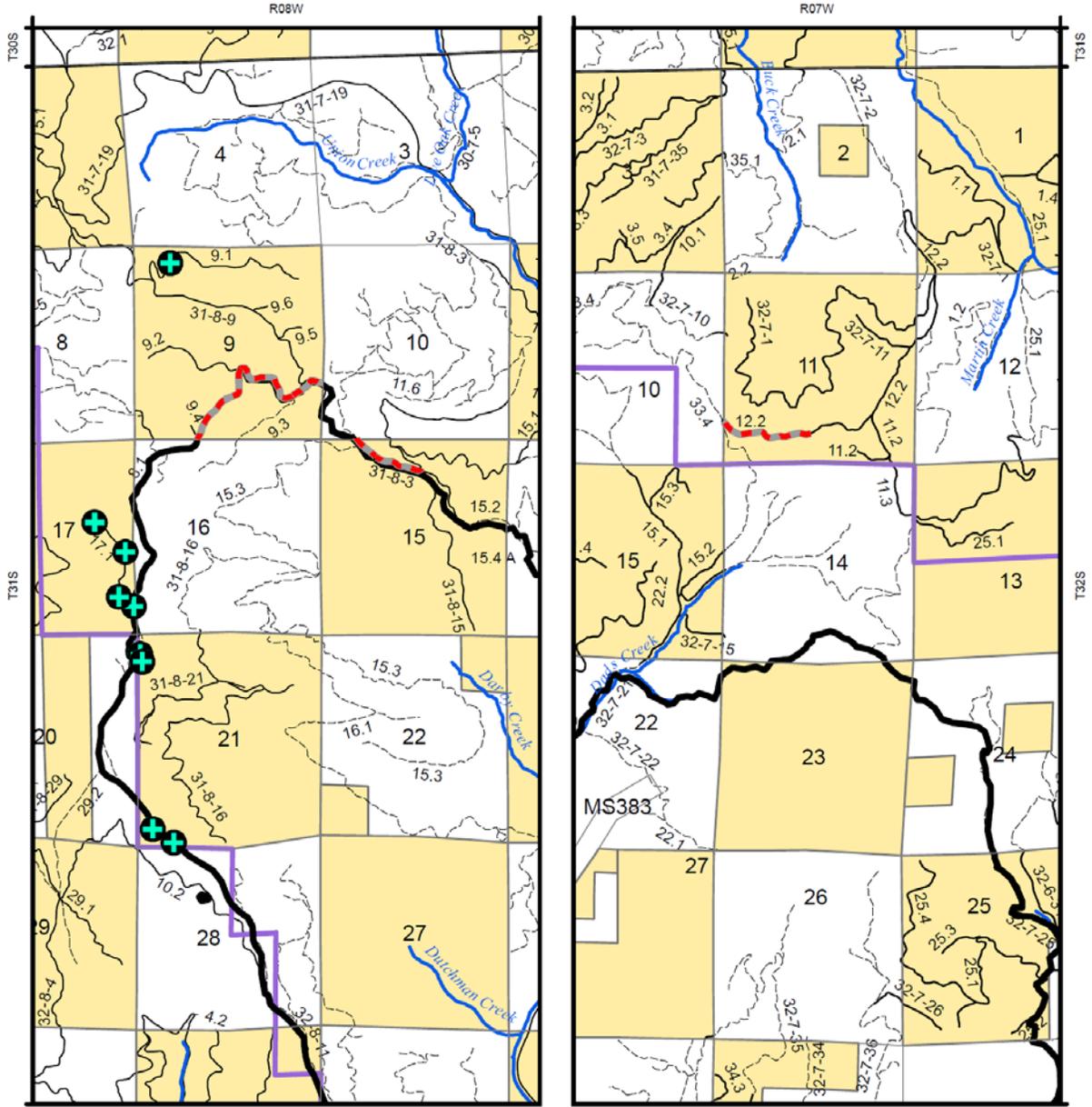
Name	Specialty	Signature	Date
Susan Carter	Botanist		9/18/13
Molly Casperson	Archeology		9/16/13
Steve Clark	Fisheries Biologist		9/23/13
Ward Fong	Soils		9/16/13
Brennan Garrelts	Team Leader		9/16/13
Sidney Post	Hydrology		9/17/13
Lisa Renan	Wildlife Biologist		9/16/13
Michelle Roberts	NEPA Coordinator		9/17/13

For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact:  
 Brennan Garrelts (South River Forester)  
 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.  
 Roseburg, OR 97471  
 (541) 464-3363

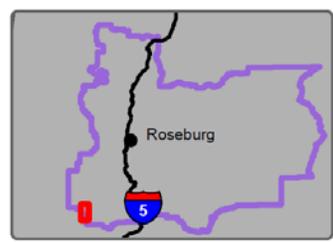
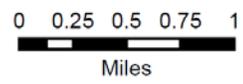
# Rabbit Mountain Fire Suppression-Created Log Removal

## Bureau of Land Management -- Roseburg District

### South River Resource Area - DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2013-0008-CX



- Legend**
- Decked logs location
  - Roadside logs areas
  - Rabbit Mountain Fire Perimeter
  - Roseburg District Boundary
  - Bureau of Land Management Road
  - Private Road
  - Bureau of Land Management



Date: 9/20/2013  
 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.

# **Rabbit Mountain Fire Suppression-Created Log Removal Decision Record**

**Bureau of Land Management  
South River Field Office, Roseburg District  
(DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2013-0008-CX)**

It is my decision to implement the Rabbit Mountain Fire Suppression-Created Log Removal Project which will remove approximately 230 thousand board feet of logs within 50 feet of the center line of existing roads. Based on the attached Categorical Exclusion (DOI-BLM-OR-R050-2013-0008-CX), I have determined that the proposed action will have no significant impact to the human environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

Any log processing (e.g. limbing and bucking to desired lengths) will be accomplished using chainsaws or tracked processing equipment. Log removal will be accomplished by using either a self-loading log truck or tracked/rubber tire loader. There will be no ground or habitat disturbance as there will be no road construction or log skidding, and all equipment operations will occur on existing roads.

Log removal will take place outside of Riparian Reserves. Access will require no more than maintenance of existing roads. Log removal will occur along BLM Roads 31-8-3.0, 31-8-8.1, 31-8-9.1, 31-8-17.1, and 32-7-12.2 or private roads on BLM land (see attached map). Logs will also be removed from the fill slopes of Michigan Springs helipond.

All equipment will be pressure-washed or steam-cleaned prior to mobilization into 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 must be re-cleaned before being returned to the project area.

Implementation will occur between August 6 and February 28, both dates inclusive, which is outside of the critical nesting periods for marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls.

There are no known archeology sites at the activity areas and there would be no ground disturbance, therefore impacts to cultural sites are not expected. If any objects of cultural value (e.g. historic or prehistoric ruins, graves, fossils, or artifacts) are found during the implementation of the proposed action, operations would be suspended until the site has been evaluated to determine the appropriate mitigation action.

## **Rationale for the Decision**

Evaluation of potential effects to special status botanical and wildlife species indicates there are no known sites in the activity areas and there would be no impacts to special status species or habitats. The activity areas are outside of Riparian Reserves. There were no Bureau Sensitive botanical, aquatic, or wildlife species issues identified.

The project area is within the Zone 2 Seasonal Restriction Corridor for the marbled murrelet. As the action would be limited to removal of logs generated during fire suppression actions, no suitable marbled murrelet habitat would be modified or removed.

No activity is proposed within northern spotted owl nest patches or core areas. All logs, with the exception of those in Section 9, are located in northern spotted owl critical habitat. As the action would be limited to removal of logs generated during fire suppression actions, no suitable habitat would be modified or removed.

**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 October 29, 2013. 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 November 13, 2013. 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) 440-4930.



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Steven Lydick  
Field Manager  
South River Field Office

10/23/13  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date