Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

Slim Sherlock
Commercial Thinning

Swiftwater Field Office, Roseburg District
NEPA #: DOI-BLM-OR-R040-2009-0005-EA

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Swiftwater Field Office will perform commercial thinning on approximately 500 acres of mid-seral forest stands, 45-51 years old, in two separate proposed timber sales: Slim Big Jim (148 acres) and Sherlock Home (352 acres). In addition, approximately five acres will be cleared or brushed for spur right-of-ways to access the harvest areas.

These sales are located in the Little River & Lower-South Umpqua River Watersheds within the Adaptive Management Area (AMA), Connectivity/Diversity Block (C/D), General Forest Management Area (GFMA), and the Riparian Reserve land use allocations. It is anticipated that the proposed timber sales will yield approximately 5.0 million board feet (5.0 MMBF) of timber in support of local and regional manufacturers and economies. The units are located in Sections 09, 19, and 31; T27S R03W; Willamette Meridian (W.M.) and Section 25; T27S R04W; W.M.

Test for Significant Impacts.

1. Has significant impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (1))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: Any impacts will be consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the 1994 *Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (1994 PRMP/EIS).

2. Has significant adverse impacts on public health or safety (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (2))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: The additional amount of down woody debris (i.e. four tons per acre) will not dramatically increase the fire risk to the area. The primary carrier of fires is the fine fuels of less than three inches in diameter. These fine fuels generated in the harvest process will mostly degrade within two years after harvest. The homes in the area are not adjacent to the projects and therefore will not have increased fire risk (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 22).

   Treatment of logging slash by prescribed fire has the potential to affect air quality locally. Burning will be accomplished under guidelines established by the Oregon Smoke Management Plan. Any impacts to local air quality will be localized and of short duration, consistent with the range and scope of those effects analyzed and described in the 1994 PRMP/EIS (pgs. 4-9 to 4-12).

3. Adversely effects such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains or ecologically significant or critical areas including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (3))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: Unique geographic characteristics (such as those listed above) are absent from the project area and will not be affected.

4. Has highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (4))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No

Remarks: The BLM conducts density management regularly across western Oregon. There is also a wide body of literature describing the environmental effects of such forest management activity. No effects are highly controversial. The public was afforded several opportunities to comment on the current proposal, and none of the comments received indicated controversy over the nature of the effects on the human environment.

5. Has highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks to the human environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (5))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: The risks to the human environment from the project were analyzed in the Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA and found not to be highly uncertain or unique.

6. Establishes a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (6))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: The advertisement, auction, and award of a timber sale contract allowing the harvest of trees is a well-established practice and will not establish a precedent for future actions.

7. Is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (7))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: The impacts to forest vegetation (pgs. 15-17), wildlife (pgs. 17-22), fire and fuels management (pg. 22), soils (pgs. 23-27), hydrology (pgs. 27-31), aquatic habitat and fisheries (pgs. 31-33), and botany (pgs. 33-35) were analyzed in the *Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA* and found not be significant.

8. Has adverse effects on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (8))?
   ( ) Yes (√) No
   Remarks: The BLM has completed Section 106 responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, in accordance with the 1998 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office protocols (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 36). No cultural resources were discovered within the Slim Sherlock project units (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 13). It has been determined that there will be no effect to cultural or historical resources (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 36).

9. May adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (9))?

Botanical Species	( ) Yes	(√) No
Fish Species	( ) Yes	(√) No
Wildlife Species	( ) Yes	(√) No

Remarks: Surveys did not identify the presence of any federally threatened or endangered botanical species; therefore the action will have no effect on listed botanical species (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 33).

Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning, and its interrelated and interdependent actions, will have no direct effects on Oregon Coast coho salmon and will not adversely modify its designated critical habitat. In addition, the project design features will ensure that no indirect effects to Oregon Coast coho salmon or their habitat will occur. Therefore, Slim Sherlock will not have an effect on Oregon Coast coho salmon or its habitat and further consultation with the NOAA Fisheries Service is not required (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 36).

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been completed for the Slim Big Jim timbersale and the Sherlock Home timbersale for the northern spotted owl and its critical habitat.

A Letter of Concurrence was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (Tails#: 13420-2009-I-0109; pgs. 34-35) dated June 9, 2009 which concurred with the District's conclusion in the Biological Assessment for *Commercial Thinning and Programmatic Actions Proposed by the Roseburg District BLM in Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010* (pgs. 71-73) that the commercial thinning activity described for the Slim Big Jim timbersale *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect* the northern spotted owl.

A Biological Opinion was received from the USFWS (*Roseburg District BLM Fiscal Year 2009-2010 Program of Activities* [Tails#: 13420-2009-F-0125]) dated July 31, 2009. The biological opinion stated (pgs. 64-65) that thinning of dispersal habitat (such as that in the Sherlock Home commercial thinning) is *likely to adversely affect* spotted owls by negatively affecting forage species (e.g. flying squirrels) that the owls may feed upon. However, the USFWS concluded in their biological opinion (pg. 75, Ref. No. 13420-2009-F-0125) that the Roseburg District's program of commercial thinning (which included the Sherlock Home project) *are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence* of the spotted owl because thinning is not likely to completely eliminate mammalian prey species and the network of reserved land use allocations would maintain a sufficient amount of dispersal habitat.

10. Threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR §1508.27(b) (10))?
    ( ) Yes (√) No
    Remarks: The measures described above ensure that Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning will be consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws. The impacts of the silvicultural treatment on the human environment will not exceed those anticipated by the 1994 PRMP/EIS.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13212, the BLM must consider the effects of this decision on the President's National Energy Policy. An electrical transmission line is within the Slim Sherlock project area but there are no known energy resources with commercial potential within the project area. Trees will be felled away from the transmission line and ground-based equipment will not be allowed to operate within the transmission line corridor (*Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning EA*, pg. 13). There will be no known adverse effect on National Energy Policy.

Based on the analysis of potential impacts contained in the environmental assessment, I have determined that Slim Sherlock Commercial Thinning will not have a significant impact on the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and that an environmental impact statement is not required. I have determined that the effects of the silvicultural treatment will be within those anticipated and already analyzed in the 1994 *Final - Roseburg District Proposed Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (1994 PRMP/EIS) and will be in conformance with 1995 *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (1995 ROD/RMP) for the Roseburg District,-approved by the Oregon/Washington State Director on June 2, 1995.

Max Yager, Field Manager
Swiftwater Field Office

10/14/2009
Date