Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001
Environmental Assessment
EA # OR-105-01-01

and

South River Commercial Thinning 2002
Environmental Assessment
EA # OR-105-02-03

Taylor Made Commercial Thinning
Decision Documentation

South River Field Office, Roseburg District Prepared: August 22, 2005

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the Taylor Made Commercial Thinning timber sale, completing implementation of Alternative 2 of the South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA as described at pages 4-8, and continuing implementation of Alternative 2 of the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA as described at pages 4-9.

The nine units of the sale are described as follows. There are two units from the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA: Angel Hair A and D corresponding to Units 4 and 5. The remaining seven units are from the South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA: Unit 1, Taylor Made A; Unit 2, Taylor Made F, G and H; Unit 3, Taylor Made D; Unit 6, Taylor Made I; Unit 7, Taylor Made J; Unit 8, Taylor Made B; and Unit 9, Taylor Made C. The units are located in: Sections 29 and 31, T. 29 S., R. 8 W.; Section 13, T. 29 S., R. 9 W.; and Sections 13 and 23, T. 30 S., R. 9 W., W.M.

Commercial thinning and density management will total 211 acres. Thinning approximately 168 acres in the General Forest Management Area and Connectivity/Diversity Block land use allocations will yield 1,751 thousand board feet (MBF) chargeable to the Roseburg District annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ). Density management on 43 acres in Riparian Reserves will yield 513 MBF, not chargeable to the ASQ. All Pacific yew trees are reserved from cutting.

Approximately one acre will be cut for road right-of-way. Individual Port-Orford-cedar trees are also designated for cutting as part of BLM efforts to control the spread of the root disease caused by *Phytopthera lateralis,* in areas cumulatively totaling approximately one acre.

Access will be provided by system and non-system roads, and construction of approximately 0.05 miles (2+85 sta.) of permanent road. Renovation to approximately 2.46 miles (129+90 sta.) will, in some instances, include initial aggregate surfacing. Another 1.78 miles (94+00 sta.) of natural surface and optional operator spur roads will be decommissioned and blocked after use. The intent is to decommission renovated/unsurfaced roads and operator optional spur roads in the same season in which they are renovated/constructed and used. If thinning cannot be completed in a single season on areas accessed by temporary roads because of events such as fire closure or an early onset of autumn rains, the roads will be winterized and used the following summer.

Rationale for the Decision:

The Roseburg District *Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP, p. 62) states that commercial thinning should be applied " . . . in the matrix where practical and where research indicates increased gains in timber production are likely." Density management in Riparian Reserves is necessary to ". . . help achieve controlled stocking, establishment of desired non-conifer vegetation, and the desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy." (ROD/RMP, pp. 153-154)

The chargeable volume is needed to contribute to the Roseburg District declared annual ASQ of 45 million board feet, and to provide for the socio-economic objectives of the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (Vol. I, p. xii). The sale also meets the requirement of the O&C Act which stipulates that the lands revested by the government from the Oregon & California Railroad are to be managed for sustained timber production. Alternative 2, the proposed alternative common to both the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA and South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA achieves these objectives. Alternative One, the alternative of "No Action" would not meet these objectives.

Comments on the two EAs were received from three organizations and one State governmental agency. These comments were considered in the preparation of this decision. No issues or concerns were identified which were not already considered and addressed in the EAs, or which constituted new information that would change the conclusions of the analysis.

The following discussion addresses the results of wildlife and botany surveys, anticipated effects to resource concerns identified in the two project EAs, and the manner in which the effects would be mitigated. Mitigation to be implemented is derived from Best Management Practices contained in the ROD/RMP, amendments to management direction from the ROD/RMP, and project design criteria identified through conferencing with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service.

Noxious Weeds

In order to reduce the likelihood of introducing or spreading noxious weeds into the project area, contract provisions will require that, with the exception of logging trucks, all logging and road construction equipment be pressure washed or steam cleaned prior to being moved into the sale area, or at any time when the equipment is removed from the area and later returned.

Port-Orford-cedar Root Disease

On May10, 2004, the *Record of Decision for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon* (POC ROD) was signed, amending the Roseburg District ROD/RMP. The POC ROD and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (POC FSEIS) address effects of forest management on the spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease. This does not constitute new information as the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA and South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA identified and considered relevant factors addressed by the POC FSEIS and proposed mitigation consistent with direction contained in the POC ROD.

The POC ROD provides management direction for assessing risk and controlling spread of the disease, in order to maintain Port-Orford-cedar as an integral component of the vegetative communities of which it is a part. The risk key contained in the POC ROD is used for site-specific analysis to assess the need for application of additional management practices. An assessment of the project area indicates no special mitigation is required.

Although no additional mitigation is indicated, measures to reduce the risk of further spread of Port-Orford-cedar root disease described in the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA (pp. 36-37) and South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA (pp. 34-35) will be implemented. These measures include: equipment washing as previously described; sanitizing water drawn from sources in the sale area for use in for road construction and dust abatement with a solution containing Clorox bleach; restricting road construction and renovation to the dry season (May 15th to October 15th); restricting hauling on unsurfaced roads to the dry season; removing all merchantable Port-Orford-cedar trees within 20 feet uphill and 50 feet downhill of roads bordering or passing through units or astride haul routes; and decommissioning and blocking unsurfaced roads upon completion of thinning operations.

Botany

Surveys for botanical species identified in the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA (p. 20) and South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA (p. 17) were conducted. None of the species were located in the project areas and no protective measures are required.

Wildlife

As identified in the Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001 EA (pp. 19-20) and South River Commercial Thinning 2002 EA (p. 16), the project area is potential habitat for the Oregon shoulderband snail *(Helminthoglypta hertleini).* Following an evaluation of habitat conditions, it was determined that no surveys were required because there was no suitable habitat. Surveys were conducted for two other mollusk species, Chace sideband snails *(Monadenia chaceana)* and spotted taildropper *(Prophysaon vanattae pardalis),* listed as Bureau Sensitive species in 2004. Neither of these species was located. As a consequence, it is considered unlikely these three mollusk species will be affected by the Taylor Made Commercial Thinning project or that the thinning would contribute to the need to list any of these species as threatened or endangered.

Marbled Murrelet

The project area is located within the 35-50 mile marbled murrelet management zone. Thinning would not remove or modify suitable nesting habitat, and surveys have determined that suitable contiguous habitat within 100 yards of the project area is unoccupied. Consequently, the project is considered "not likely to adversely affect" marbled murrelets for either habitat modification or disturbance.

Northern Spotted Owl

It was determined that disturbance associated with the thinning project "may affect" but is not likely to adversely affect spotted owls because there are known no activity centers within a quarter mile of any unit, placing project activities well beyond the 65 yard disturbance threshold.

Thinning would be limited to dispersal habitat for the northern spotted owl. The project would not remove primary nesting and roosting habitat constituents, and would maintain at least 40 percent canopy closure. Within 10-15 years canopy closure will return to pre-thinning levels, and use by owls for dispersal and foraging is expected to rise as the greater structural and vegetative complexity will support more abundant prey. As a consequence, the BLM has made a determination of "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" for habitat modification.

In a Letter of Concurrence (File No. 1-15-05-I-0511, p. 27) dated June 24, 2005, the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that this type of project is not likely to adversely affect spotted owls because it will not occur within the disturbance threshold distance of any known nest site or activity center from March 1- June 30, and will not remove suitable habitat within one-quarter mile of any known nest site or activity center from March 1- September 30.

Fish and Essential Fish habitat

There are no streams that support Oregon Coast coho salmon, nor any reaches designated as Essential Fish Habitat within two miles of any of the thinning units. The sole potential effect would be associated with sediment. The BLM has determined that the likelihood of sediment reaching areas inhabited by coho salmon and steelhead trout is negligible and that the project is not likely to adversely affect these species and would have no adverse affect on Essential Fish Habitat. In a letter dated June 30, 2003, NOAA/Fisheries concurred with this finding.

Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with provisions from Appendix I of the ROD/RMP (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199), and will focus on the following resources: Riparian Reserves; Matrix; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; and Special Status Species Habitat.

Protest Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice 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.

_____

William S. Haigh Date
Field Manager
South River Field Office

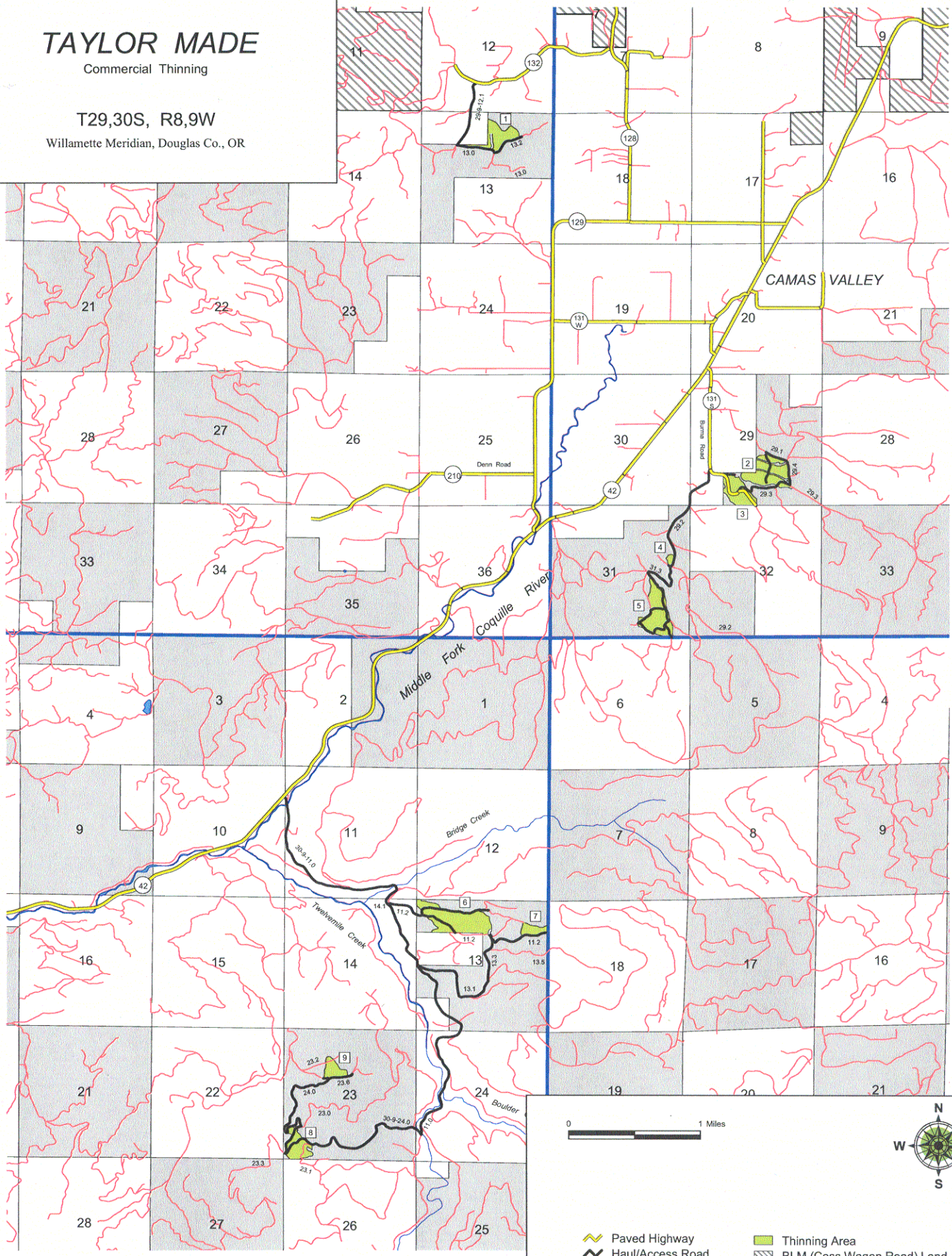
'Commercial Thinning 2002' EA

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning

T29,30S, R8,9W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR



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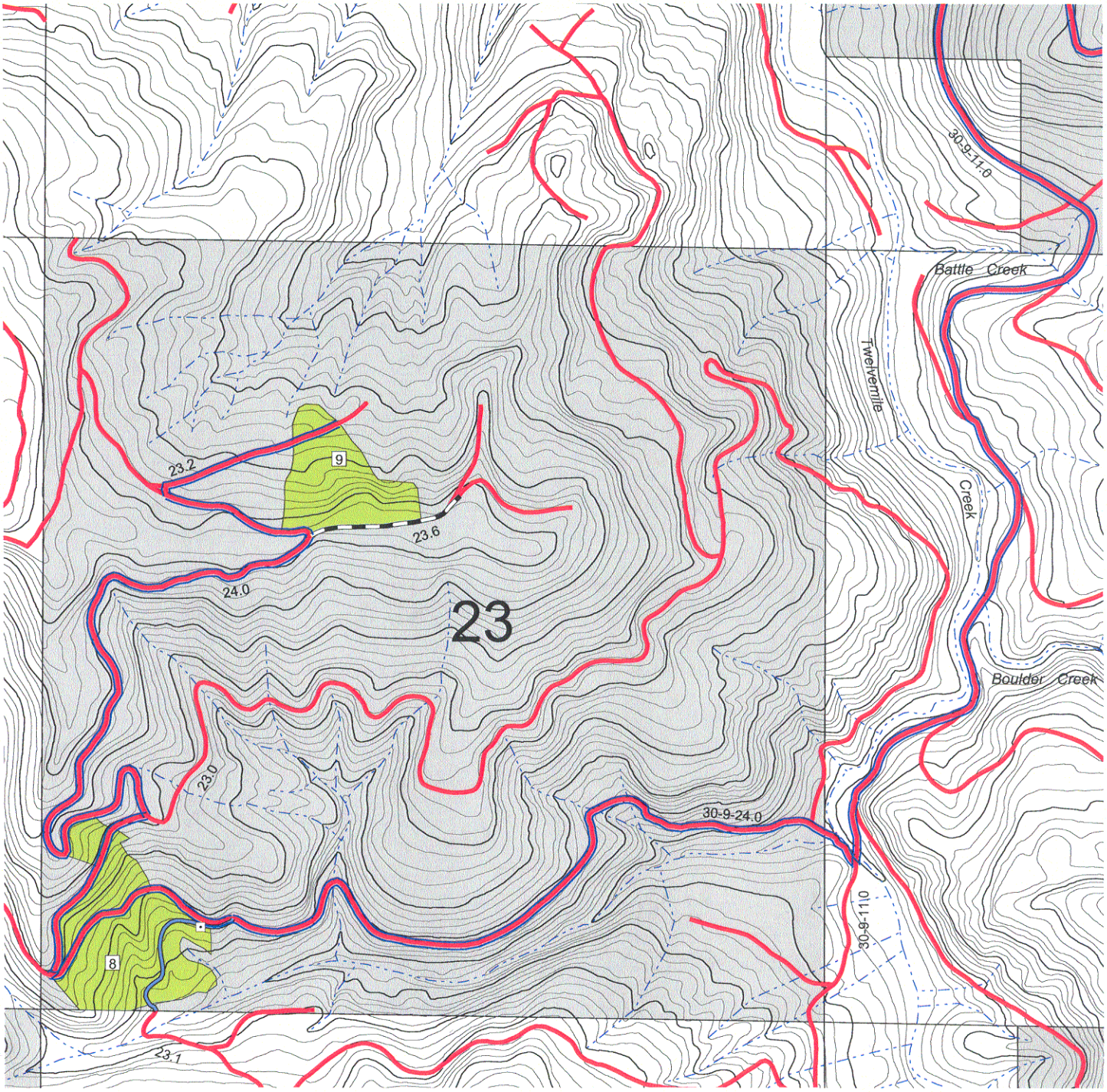
4-6-2005

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning



N
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0 1,000 Feet

T30S, R9W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR

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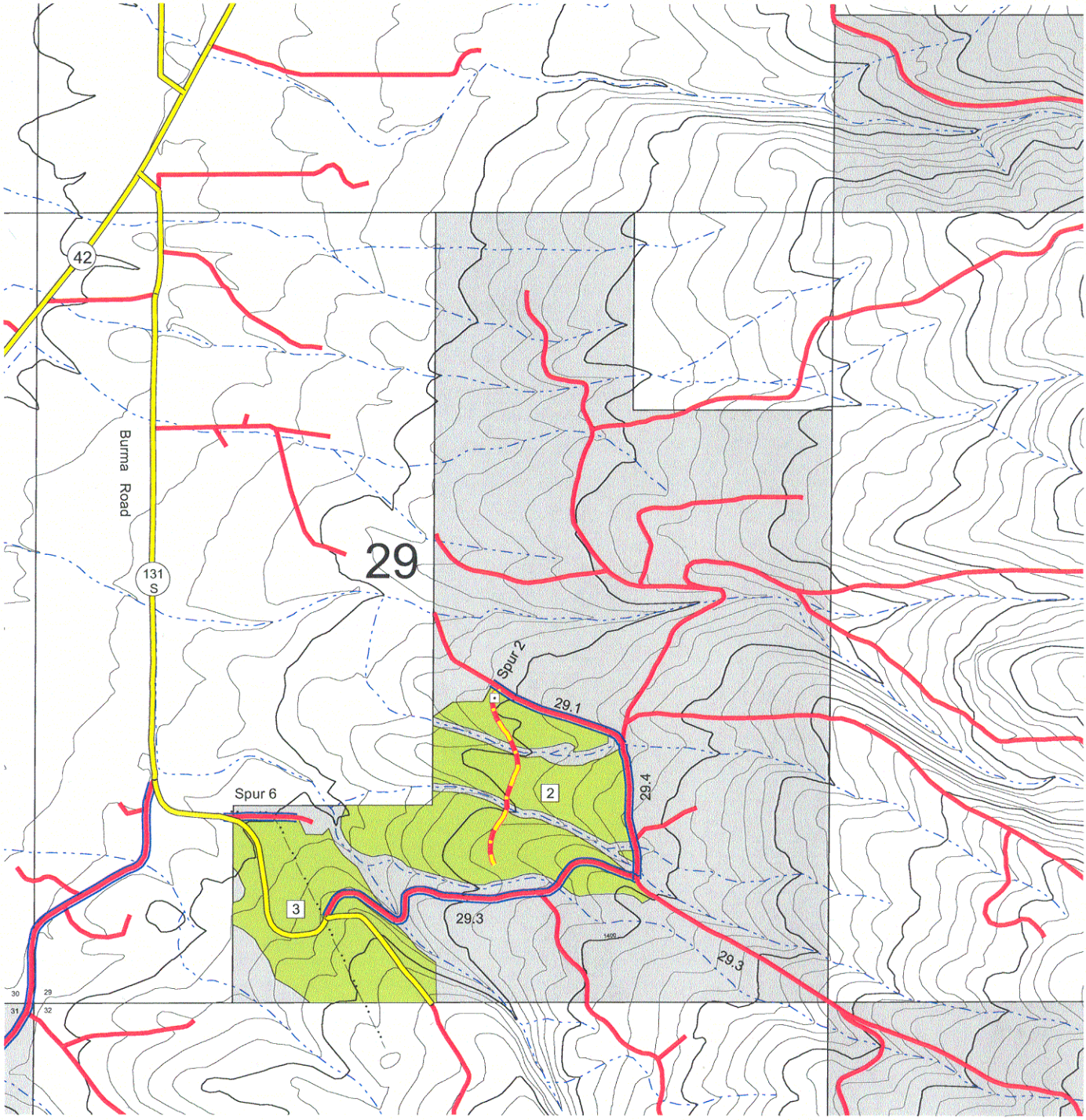
- Construct Roadblock
- Existing Road
- Haul/Access Route
- Renovate, Permanent Rock
- Road to Decommission
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour
- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- Non-BLM Land

4-6-2005

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning



N
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T29S, R8W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR

0 1,000 Feet

Paved Highway
Existing Road
Haul/Access Route
Renovate, Decommission
Power Line R/W
Stream
20 ft. Contour
100 ft. Contour

Thinning Area
BLM (O&C) Land
Non-BLM Land

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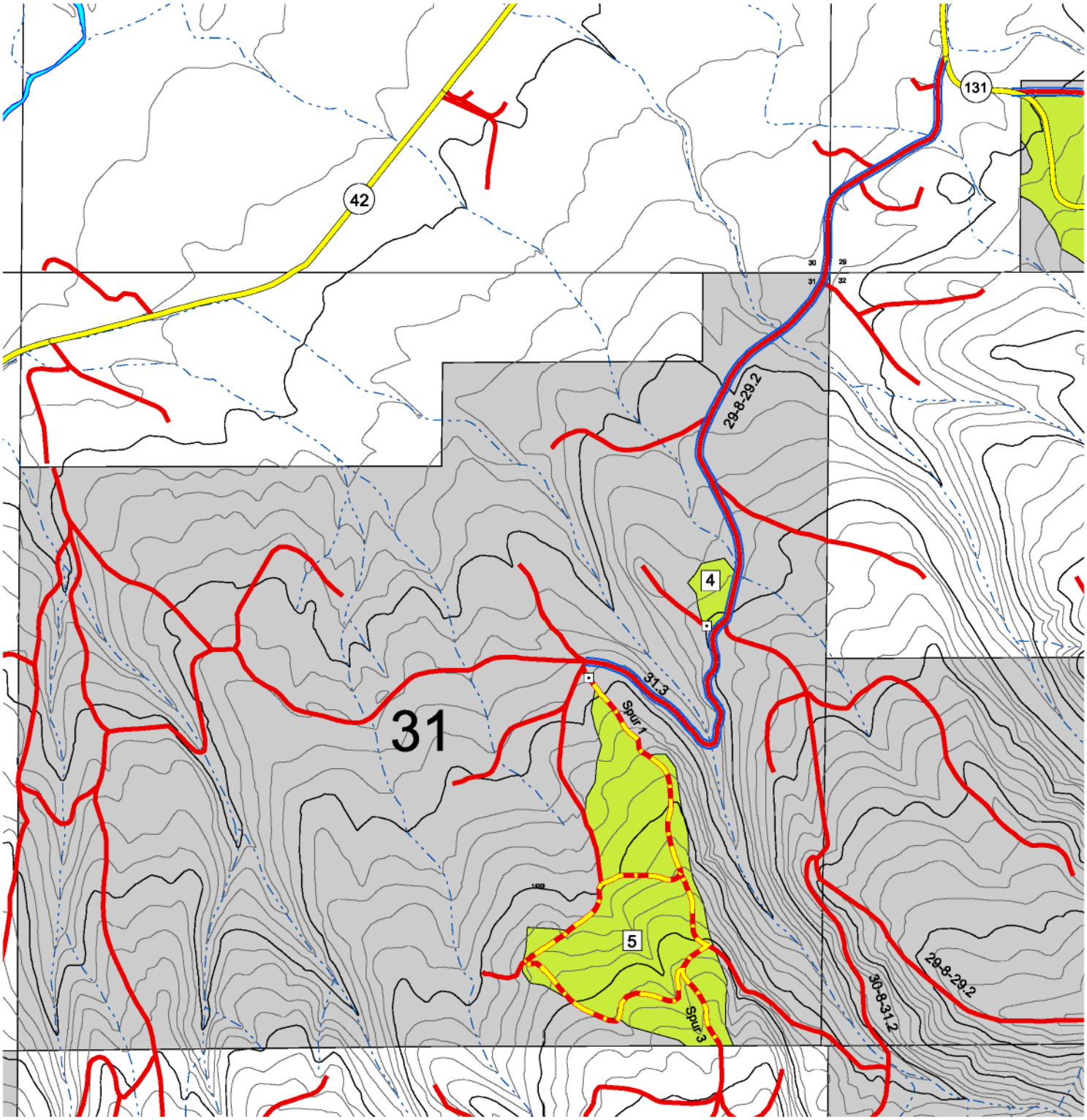
4-6-2005

'Commercial Thinning 2002' EA
(Units 4&5, 'Middle Fork Coquille Commercial Thinning 2001' EA)

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning



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T29S, R8W
Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR

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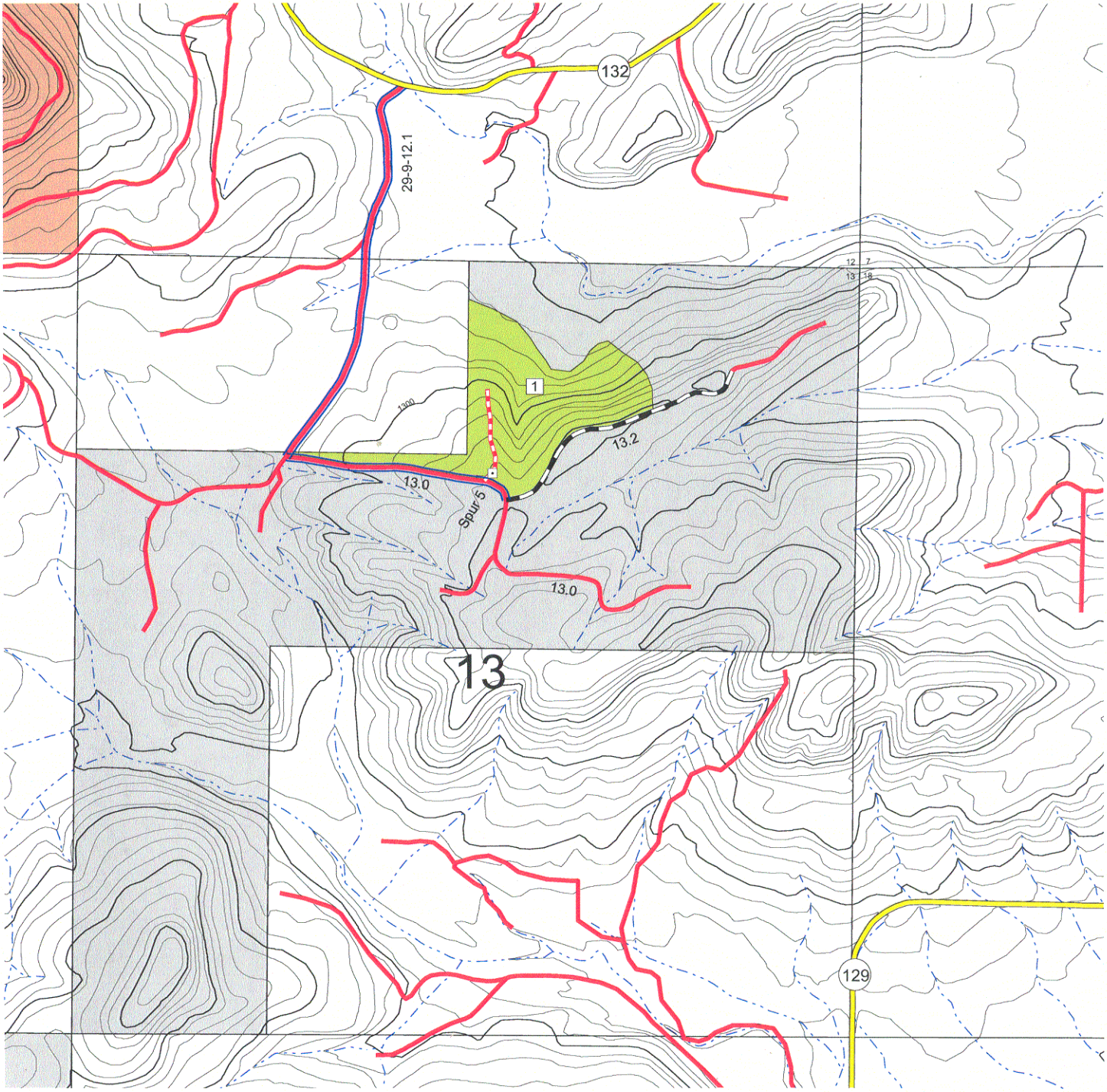
- Construct Roadblock
- Paved Highway
- Existing Road
- Haul/Access Route
- Renovate, Decommission
- Stream
- 20' Contour
- 100' Contour
- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- Non-BLM Land

11-6-2005

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning



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T29S, R9W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR

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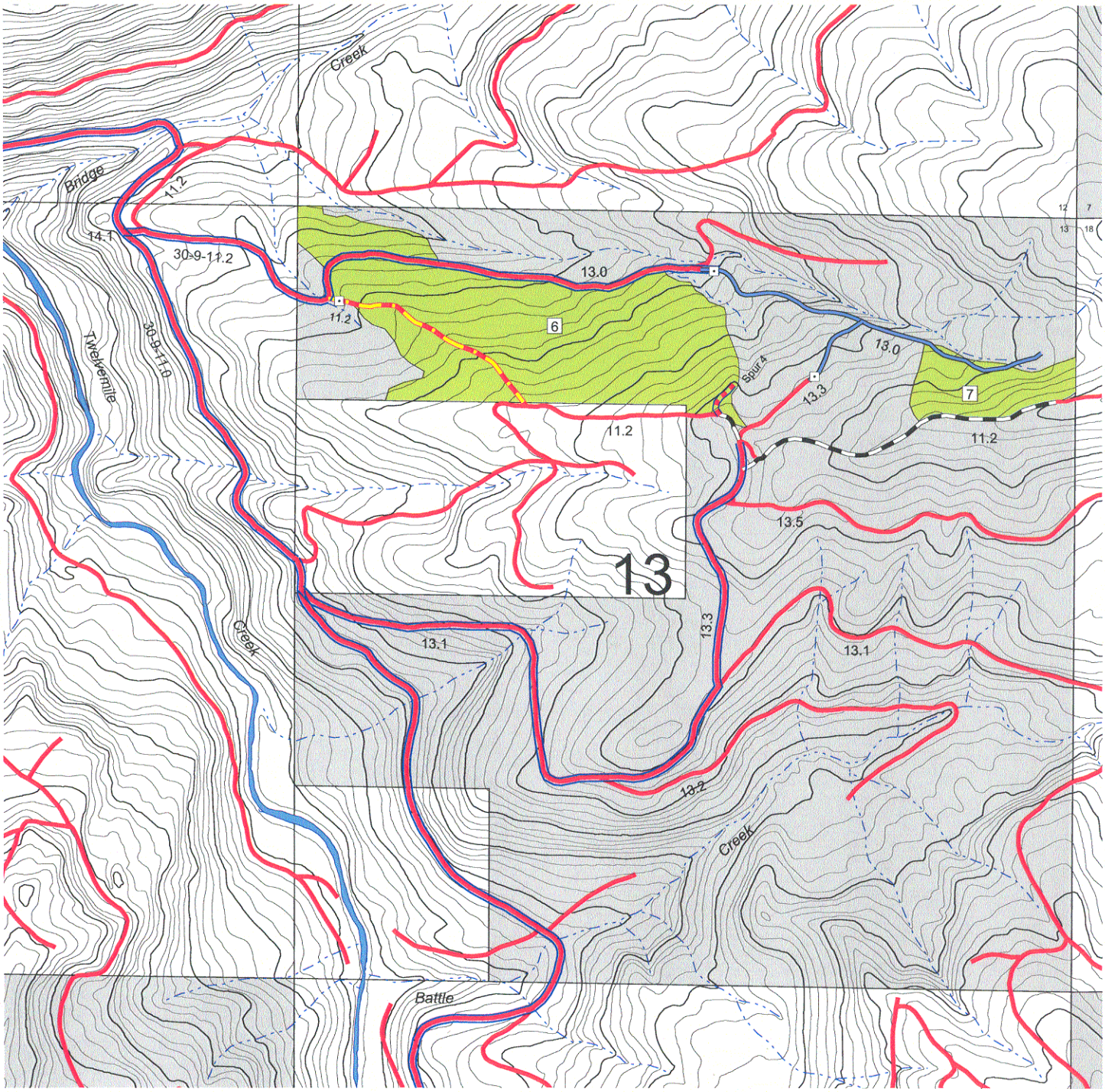
- Construct Roadblock
- Paved Highway
- Existing Road
- Haul/Access Route
- Renovate, Permanent Rock
- Operator Spur
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour
- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- BLM (Coos Wagon Road) Land
- Non-BLM Land

4-6-2005

TAYLOR MADE

Commercial Thinning



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T30S, R9W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR

0 1,000 Feet

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- Construct Roadblock
- Existing Road
- Haul/Access Route
- Construct, Permanent Rock
- Renovate, Permanent Rock
- Renovate, Decommission
- Road to Decommission
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour

- Thinning Area
- BLM (O&C) Land
- Non-BLM Land

4-6-2005