

***Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management
Environmental Assessment***

**Olly Cat Density Management
Decision Document**

Bureau of Land Management
South River Field Office, Roseburg District Office
EA# OR-105-06-06

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the Olly Cat Density Management project, partially implementing Alternative Two described in the Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management EA (pp. 4-11).

The project will treat 391 acres comprising 13 units located in Sections 7 and 19 of T. 30 S., R. 7 W., and Sections 1, 11, 13 and 23 of T. 30 S., R. 8 W., W. M. on lands allocated as Late-Successional Reserves. The project will yield an estimated 4,441 thousand board feet of timber. This timber volume is not chargeable to the Roseburg District declared annual allowable sale quantity of 45 million board feet.

Density management will be primarily accomplished by skyline cable-yarding systems, although Unit 3 and portions of Units 5, 7 and 13 are authorized for ground-based operations.

As described in the EA (p. 7), skyline cable-yarding equipment will be capable of maintaining a minimum of one-end log suspension to reduce soil disturbance and compaction. Yarding corridors will be pre-designated by the purchaser and approved by the contract administrator. A minimum 100 feet of lateral yarding capability is required so that corridors may be spaced at intervals of 200 feet, when practical, to reduce the number of corridors and landings needed, and minimize the area subject to soil disturbance and compaction. Where necessary, corridors will be hand water-barred and covered with woody debris to minimize potential for surface erosion.

As stated in the EA (p. 8), skid trails for ground-based operations will be pre-designated and generally limited to slopes of less than 35 percent. Primary skid trails, including existing trails that are re-used, and landings will not affect more than 10 percent of the ground-based harvest area. As clarified in the 2001 Roseburg District Annual Program Summary (p. 70), exceptions would include situations such as small inclusions of steeper slopes, connecting trails to isolated ground-based harvest areas, or existing trails that can be used without undue effects to soils. Existing skid trails will be utilized to the greatest degree practical.

Thinning on units or portions of units designated for ground-based yarding or accessed by unsurfaced, temporary roads will be seasonally restricted to the dry season, typically between mid-May and mid-October, but may be extended under provisional waiver if autumn weather remains dry.

Felling and yarding of timber, other than for clearing of road rights-of-way, is seasonally restricted from April 15 to July 15 during the bark slip period.

Primary access will be provided by existing permanent roads. Approximately 3.1 miles of road will be renovated. The renovation will include an estimated 2.13 miles of surfacing with aggregate materials and replacement of three cross-drain culverts. The principal intent of the renovation is to allow for all-weather haul, reduce road generated sediments, and reduce or eliminate the delivery of sediment to streams.

Nine temporary spur roads, totaling approximately 2.18 miles in length, will be constructed to provide access to suitable landing areas. The spur roads are located principally within the boundaries of the density management units. Approximately eight acres will be cut for rights-of-way an average of 30 feet in width. Twenty-four trees greater than 20 inches diameter breast height will be cut in the rights-of-way, the largest of these being 26 inches diameter breast height. Sixteen dead or dying trees are designated for removal in association with renovation of a portion of Road No. 30-8-11.5 and construction of Spur #2. Nine trees, four of which are non-merchantable, are designated for cutting adjacent to Road No. 30-7-18.3 to provide a truck turnaround.

Spurs #4 and #9 will be blocked after use, as an adjacent landowner has requested they not be sub-soiled because they will provide access to adjoining private timber lands. The remaining spurs will be sub-soiled. As discussed in the EA (p. 9), the intent is to use and decommission temporary roads in the same operating season in which they are constructed.

Rationale for the Decision:

The ROD/RMP (p.29) directs that silvicultural treatments beneficial to the creation of late-successional habitat be planned and implemented in LSRs in forest stands up to 80 years of age, if needed to create and maintain late-successional forest conditions. This will be accomplished by precommercial or commercial thinning of stands regardless of origin (e.g., planted after logging or naturally regenerated after fire or blowdown).

Management priorities identified in the *South Coast-Northern Klamath LSRA* include enlarging existing interior late-successional habitat blocks, maintaining and improving habitat connections between and within LSRs, and creating late-successional habitat where absent.

Implementation of Alternative Two, the proposed action, is consistent with these objectives and will meet the purpose and need identified in the Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management EA (pp. 1-3), whereas Alternative One, the no action alternative, will not.

On July 25, 2007, a new *Record of Decision to Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* was signed. The effect of the decision is to eliminate the provisions of the Survey and Manage program set forth in the *Record of Decision for Amendments (ROD) to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*.

Public Comments

Comments were received from two organizations during issue identification for the Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management EA and considered in development of the alternatives. Upon its release for public review, timely comments were received from two organizations. None of the comments identified issues or concerns or provided information not already considered and addressed in the EA or in this decision.

Following is a summary of some of the comments received and how they have already been addressed.

“The LSRA requires that “... stands ages 15-29 would have the highest priority for selection for a density management treatment. Stands aged 30-48 would be a lower priority for selection, and stands aged 50-80 would have the lowest priority for selection for a density management treatment”. Yet the units in this project are almost all in the lower and lowest priority category.”

The South River Field Office has been conducting density management in the highest priority areas identified in the LSR Assessment as stands 15-29 years old. These are pre-commercial thinning treatments done under a categorical exclusion. In the LSRs in the watershed, 78 percent of the acres in this age have been treated. In the lower priority stands, 30-48 years old, 51 percent of the available acres have been treated, and in the lowest priority stands, 50-80 years old, 13 percent have been treated.

“The proposal appears to strive to maintain the native species diversity. “Maintain native species diversity and structural composition of the forest stands”. However, this is not clear if the goal is to help to restore the species diversity that existed in the original forest, before it was clearcut and replanted with a single species, Douglas fir. The EA is again unclear when it says: “Less common conifer species would also be favored for retention, in sufficient numbers to maintain them as stand components.” Is that the current stand component, or the original stand component? We would appreciate it if you cleared this up in the Decision Document. Could you please assure us that the project goal is to attain the natural species mix, not the current species mix.”

Douglas-fir has always been the predominant component of forest stands in the watershed. The stands are not being managed for the exclusion of other species, though.

As stated in the EA (p. 6), in order to maintain structural and habitat diversity, retention tree selection will not be based solely on the healthiest best formed trees but will include trees with broken or deformed tops that could provide future roosting and nesting structure. Less common (numerous) conifer species will be favored for retention, in numbers sufficient to maintain them as stand components. As stated in the EA (p. 14), this would include conifer species such as grand fir, western redcedar, incense-cedar, western hemlock, Pacific yew, ponderosa pine, and sugar pine. In addition, as described in the EA (p. 5), in areas of heavy thinning and gap creation, underplanting will include species such as Ponderosa pine, western redcedar and incense cedar.

The marking prescription requires marking cedars eight inches diameter breast height and larger on an 18-foot spacing. These trees are not counted toward the target basal area. The exception is where Port-Orford-cedar is located within 20 feet of a road, on the uphill side, or within 50 feet downslope of roads.

Hardwoods selected for retention will generally be greater than 10 inches DBH and exhibit a reasonable likelihood of surviving the density management treatment. Species will include chinkapin and Pacific madrone on the drier slopes, and bigleaf maple moister slopes and north aspects.

“The EA says, “Openings would be up to 0.8 acres in size”. However, the LSRA for this area recommends openings not to exceed .25 acres in size. “Three to 10 percent of the stand would be in heavily thinned patches of less than 50 trees per acres, or in openings up to 0.25 acre in size to maximize individual tree development and initiate structural diversity...” The Deep Six units do not exceed the LSRA recommendations – only the Olly Cat units exceed it. The EA failed to explain this, and if there is an REO exemption for increasing opening sizes.”

In LSR 261, located in the Coastal province, openings are limited to 0.25 acres in size. The BLM submitted a proposal to the Regional Ecosystem Office to create larger openings in LSR 259 and LSR 223, which are in the Klamath province. The Regional Ecosystem Office reviewed the proposal and supporting data and granted approval for openings up to 1.5 acres in size and heavy thinning of up to 50 percent of the treated area.

“The EA failed make clear that some of the larger trees that need to be thinned out will be left for down wood or snags, instead of sold. Since this is an LSR, the logging volume should be the outcome of the restoration, the goal of the restoration. Dead wood is most valuable in large size trees. There aren’t many large sized trees in the units. Therefore, the largest of the trees that needed to be removed should be retained for dead wood before logging, not sold.

Another problem with waiting years after the sale to make a needs determination for dead wood is that there are no established protocols for making this determination. There is nothing to trigger the post-treatment assessment. There is no protocol for who will do it, who will pay for it (since the sale is over), how the assessment is performed and what standards will be used. The BLM has never done this post-treatment assessment before, and if so, it has never been monitored.”

The EA (p. 10) discusses the manner in which requirements for snags and coarse wood will be largely met without a need for additional efforts. Contract provisions will stipulate reservation of existing coarse woody debris in Decay Classes 3, 4, and 5. Snags felled for safety or operational reasons will be retained on site to supplement existing coarse woody debris. Tree tops broken out during density management operations, as well as natural events such as windthrow, wind break, snow break, and suppression mortality are expected to provide additional coarse woody debris. As further described, sound hardwood and conifer snags will be retained and protected to the greatest degree practicable. The potential need for additional trees to meet snag and coarse wood needs has been factored into the marking prescriptions.

The LSR Assessment established a protocol for meeting snag and coarse wood objectives within five years following density management. The EA (p.11) states that surveys will be conducted after the first winter following density management, in order to monitor levels of coarse wood and numbers of snags. In the event that deficits exist, additional trees reserved under the marking prescription will be felled or girdled to meet the appropriate objectives.

The South River Field Office has been conducting monitoring of snags and dead wood in density management units. Third year surveys have been completed on Slimewater Density Management and a contract was awarded for the supplementation of coarse wood and snags in the fall of 2007. First year monitoring has also been completed on Lively Shively Density Management to get baseline levels.

This project will also be monitored post-treatment, and money is budgeted for preparation of a contract to create snags and down wood based if the surveys indicate that it is necessary.

Wildlife

Threatened and Endangered Species

As stated in the EA (p. 43), the Olly Cat Density Management project is located within Critical Habitat Unit OR-62, designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the survival and recovery of the **northern spotted owl**. Although dispersal habitat will be modified, habitat availability and connectivity will continue to provide for the survival and recovery of spotted owls because a minimum average canopy closure of 40 percent will be maintained in combination with structural elements needed to support spotted owl dispersal. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed that density management activities are not likely to adversely affect spotted owl critical habitat (File No. 1-15-05-I-0511, p. 28) or preclude the intended function of Critical Habitat because the primary constituent elements will persist post-treatment, canopy cover will not fall below 40 percent, and adequate dispersal habitat will be available in the project area pre-harvest and post-harvest.

Density management will not reduce the ability of the affected home ranges to support spotted owls because:

- The units do not contain nesting, roosting and foraging habitat, and the dispersal-only habitat will retain its functionality,
- Existing coarse wood and snags are reserved to the extent possible and will continue to provide habitat for prey species,
- The amount and distribution of untreated dispersal-only habitat in the affected home ranges will allow spotted owls to access nesting, roosting and foraging habitat, and
- Noise disruption will not affect nesting or fledging activities.

Over the long term, spotted owls will benefit as density management stimulates development of nesting, roosting and foraging habitat; creates additional coarse wood and snags; contributes to development of larger contiguous blocks of suitable habitat; and decreases risk of large scale loss of habitat too events such as fire, insects and windthrow by maintaining tree growth and vigor.

As described in the EA (p. 21), suitable **marbled murrelet** nesting habitat is present in Olly Cat Unit P and within 100 yards of Olly Cat Units B, C, D, E, and P; and Deep Six Unit A. Two years of protocol surveys were conducted without any detection of occupancy. Olly Cat unit P has been marked with the direction of a wildlife biologist to retain suitable nest trees and maintain habitat functionality so that the project will not affect suitable nesting habitat. Consequently, no disturbance to marbled murrelets or loss of suitable nesting habitat is expected, and no seasonal operating restrictions are required.

Bureau Sensitive Species

Protocol surveys were conducted for the **Chace sideband** (*Monadenia chaceana*), **green sideband** (*Monadenia fidelis beryllica*), and **Oregon shoulderband** (*Helminthoglypta hertleini*) snails. The results of the surveys were negative and no effects to any of these species are expected.

Botany

As described in the EA (p. 31), the density management units were surveyed in the spring of 2007 for Special Status Species that might be expected in the project area (EA, Appendix D). No Special Status plant species were located and no direct effects are anticipated.

As described in the EA (pp. 31-32), no known sites of Bureau Sensitive fungi species will be affected. It is acknowledged that density management could result in loss of unknown sites, but this is not expected to lead to a need to list any of these species under the Endangered Species Act because, as discussed in the EA (p. 56), suitable fungi habitat is expected to remain abundant and well-distributed throughout the Olalla Creek-Lookingglass Creek fifth-field watershed.

Aquatic Habitat, Fish, and Essential Fish Habitat

There are presently no listed fish species in the project area or on the entire Roseburg District, though it is acknowledged that the Oregon Coast coho salmon is proposed for listing as a threatened species. As described in the EA (p. 31), Essential Fish Habitat is more than 0.8 miles downstream from all density management units. The only potential effect to fish identified is with respect to sediment, but with implementation of the project design features and best management practices described in the EA (pp. 6-10) the risk for sediment will be localized and the risk of adverse effects to any fish, including coho salmon, and to Essential Fish Habitat downstream of the project area will be negligible.

Water Quality

As described in the EA (p. 27), no known sediment data exists for streams in the vicinity of the Olly Cat Density Management units. Aquatic habitat surveys described in the EA (p. 28) did not identify any stream reaches as sediment impaired.

Road Nos. 30-8-13.0 and 30-7-19.0 were identified as potential sources of stream sedimentation. Measures described in the EA (pp. 50 and 53) will be implemented to reduce the sediment potential of existing roads and prevent new roads from becoming new sources.

As described in the EA (p. 49), no effect to stream temperatures is expected because variable-width “no-harvest” buffers will retain primary streamside shade and maintain water temperatures.

Aquatic Conservation Strategy

Riparian Reserve equivalents have been designated on all perennial and intermittent streams in the Olly Cat Density Management project. “No-harvest” buffers have been established to retain stream side shading and stream temperatures, prevent stream bank disturbance, and provide a filtering strip to intercept any sediment borne by overland flow. Other management direction and project design features are being applied to minimize disruption of natural flow paths, including diversion of stream flow and interception of surface and subsurface flow; and maintaining fish passage at all road crossings.

The Olly Cat Density Management project is not located in a **Key Watershed**, so there is no additional management direction that applies.

As addressed in the Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management EA (pp. 1 and 28), information from **Watershed Analysis** was considered and incorporated into the analysis of effects. Additional information from Aquatic Habitat Inventory surveys conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife was used, in conjunction with site-specific evaluations, in describing aquatic conditions throughout the watershed.

As described in the EA (pp. 2-3), density management will: protect and enhance late-successional forest ecosystems; promote development of old-growth characteristics; maintain native species diversity and structural composition; and acquire desired vegetation characteristics in riparian areas. Consequently, this is a **Watershed Restoration** action.

In consideration of these facts, and the analysis contained in the Olalla-Lookingglass LSR Density Management EA, it is my conclusion that the Olly Cat Density Management project is consistent with the intent and direction for the Aquatic Conservation Strategy set forth in the 1994 *Record of Decision for Amendments (ROD) to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, and the 1995 Roseburg District *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*.

Cultural/Historical Resources

A cultural resource inventory conducted on the Olly Cat units identified two cultural sites. One located on the western edge of Unit 1 (B) was excluded by modifying the unit boundary. The second site is near, but outside of Unit 7 (J). The contract administrator will monitor operations to ensure that the site is not inadvertently disturbed.

Noxious Weeds

All logging and road construction equipment, excluding log trucks and crew transport, 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 must be cleaned before being returned to the project area.

Monitoring:

Monitoring of the effects of the project will be done in accordance with provisions contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (p. 84, 191-192, & 194-199), and will focus on the following resources: Late-Successional Reserves; Air Quality; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Fish Habitat; and Special Status Species Habitat.

Protest Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 – Administrative Remedies at § 5003.3 (a), protests may be filed within 15 days of the publication date of the timber sale notice. Publication of such notice on December 27, 2007, in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon, constitutes the decision date from which such protests may be filed. Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision.

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.

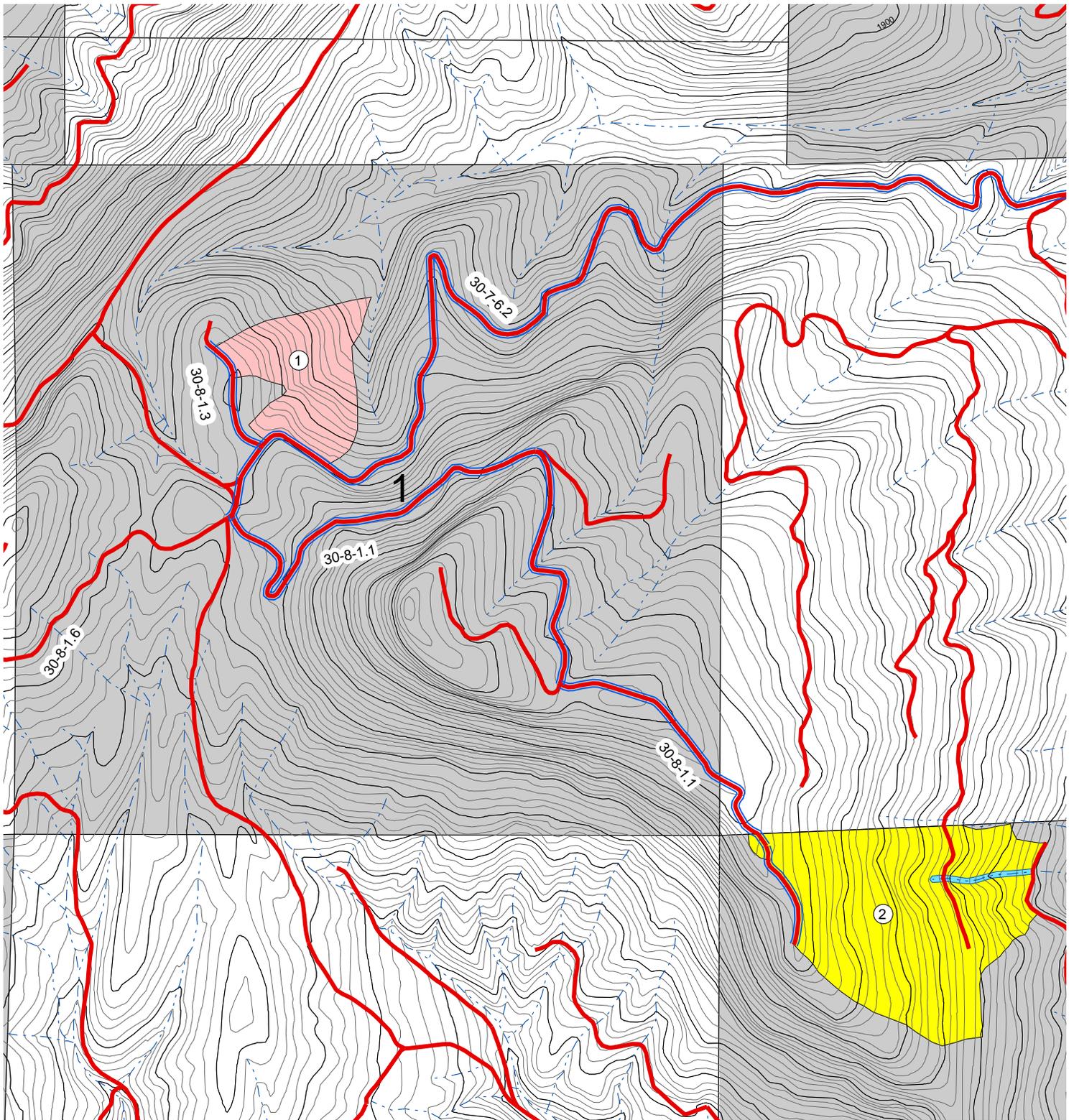
As set forth in 43 CFR 5003.3 subsection (c), protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the timber sale notice are not timely filed and shall not be considered.

Ralph Thomas
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date

OLLY CAT

Density Management



0 1,000 Feet

T30S, R8W
Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

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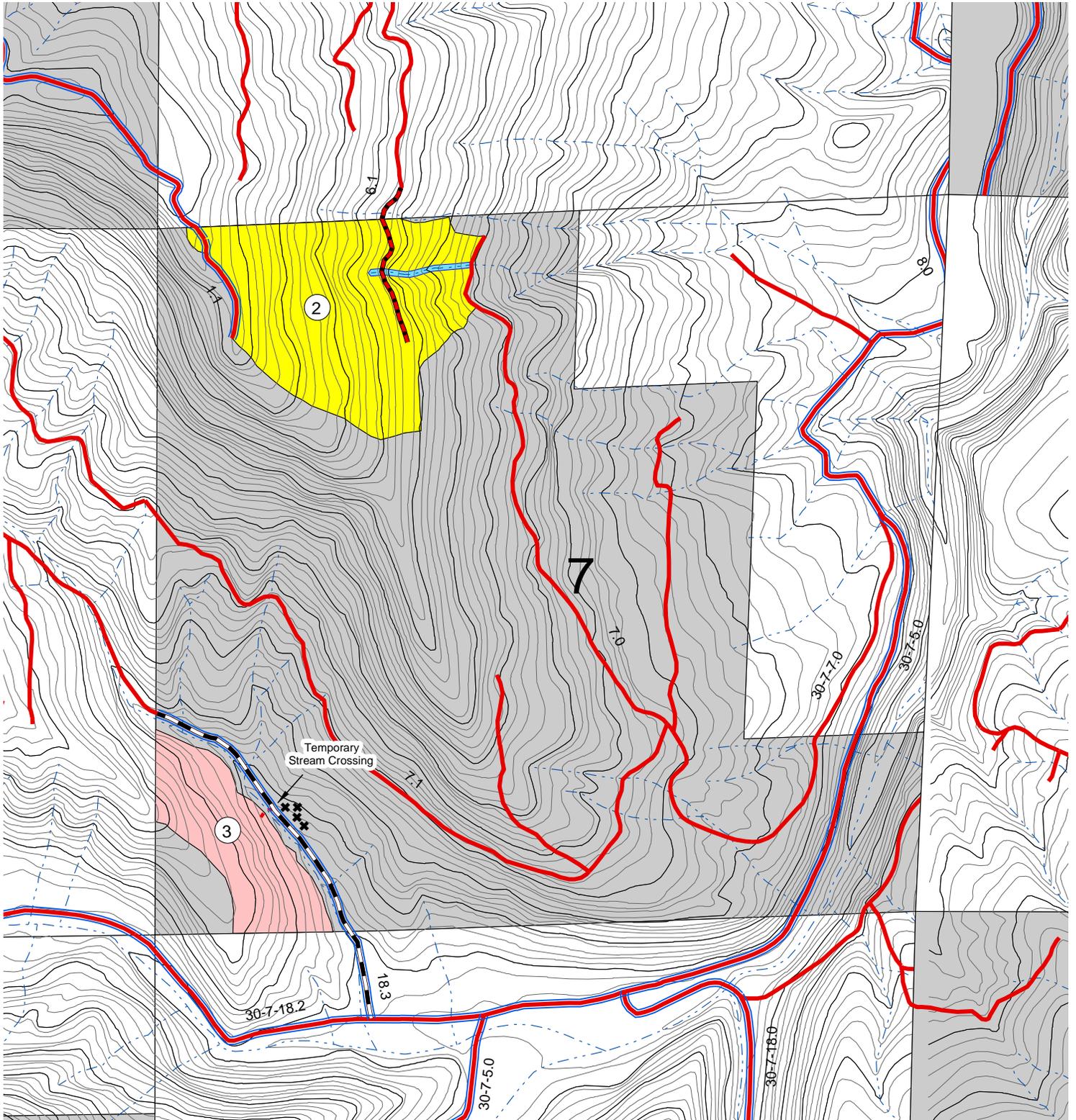


- Existing Road
- Construct, Decommission
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour

- Heavy Thinning Area
- Moderate Thinning Area
- Light Thinning Area
- No Harvest Riparian Buffer
- BLM (O&C) Land
- BLM (PD) Land
- Non-BLM Land

OLLY CAT

Density Management



T30S, R7W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

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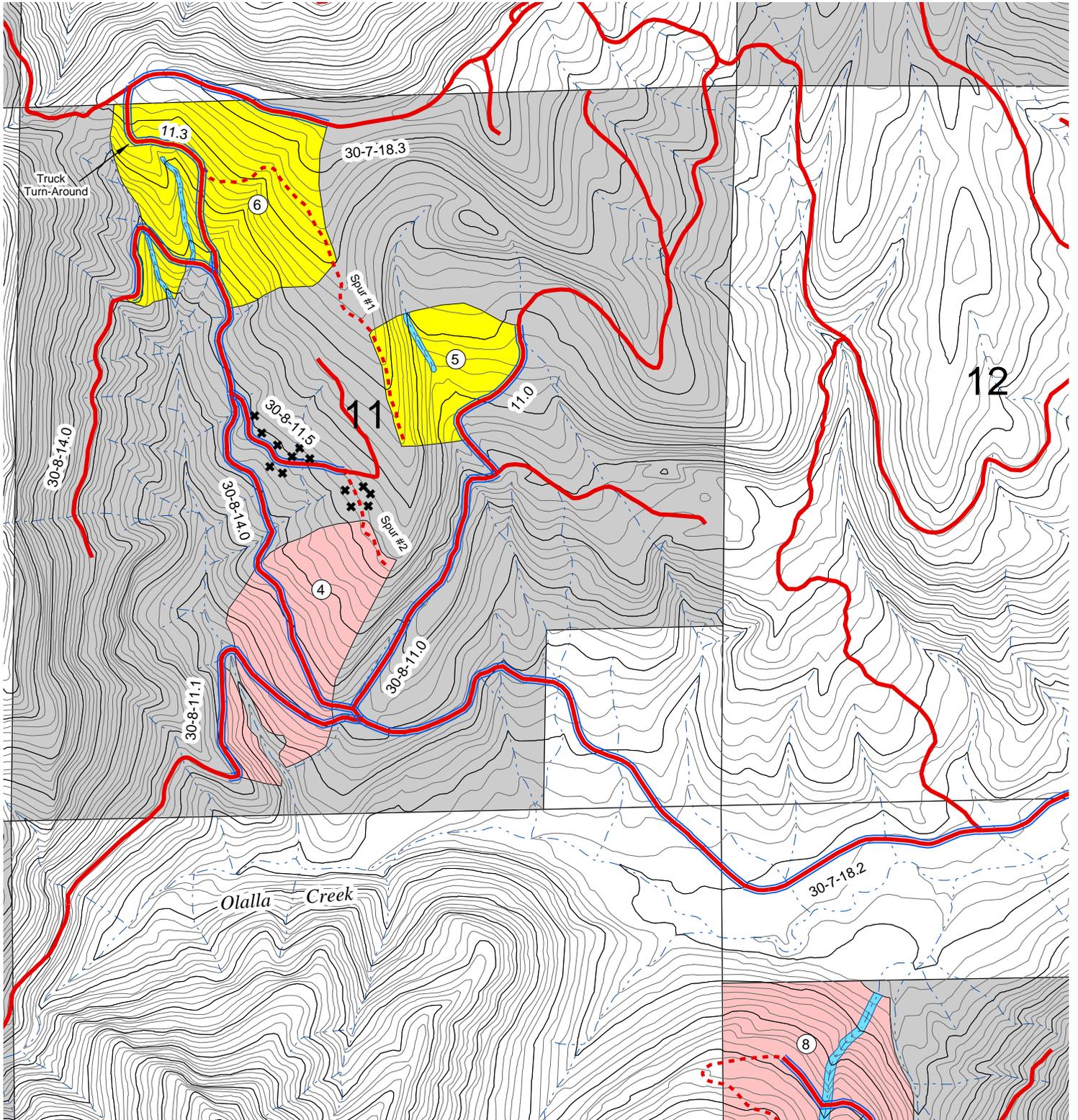


- XXX** Trees Marked For Cutting In The Reserve Area
- Existing Road
- Renovate, Rock
- Optional Operator Spur
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour

- Heavy Thinning Area
- Moderate Thinning Area
- Light Thinning Area
- No Harvest Riparian Buffer
- BLM (O&C) Land
- BLM (PD) Land
- Non-BLM Land

OLLY CAT

Density Management



T30S, R8W

Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

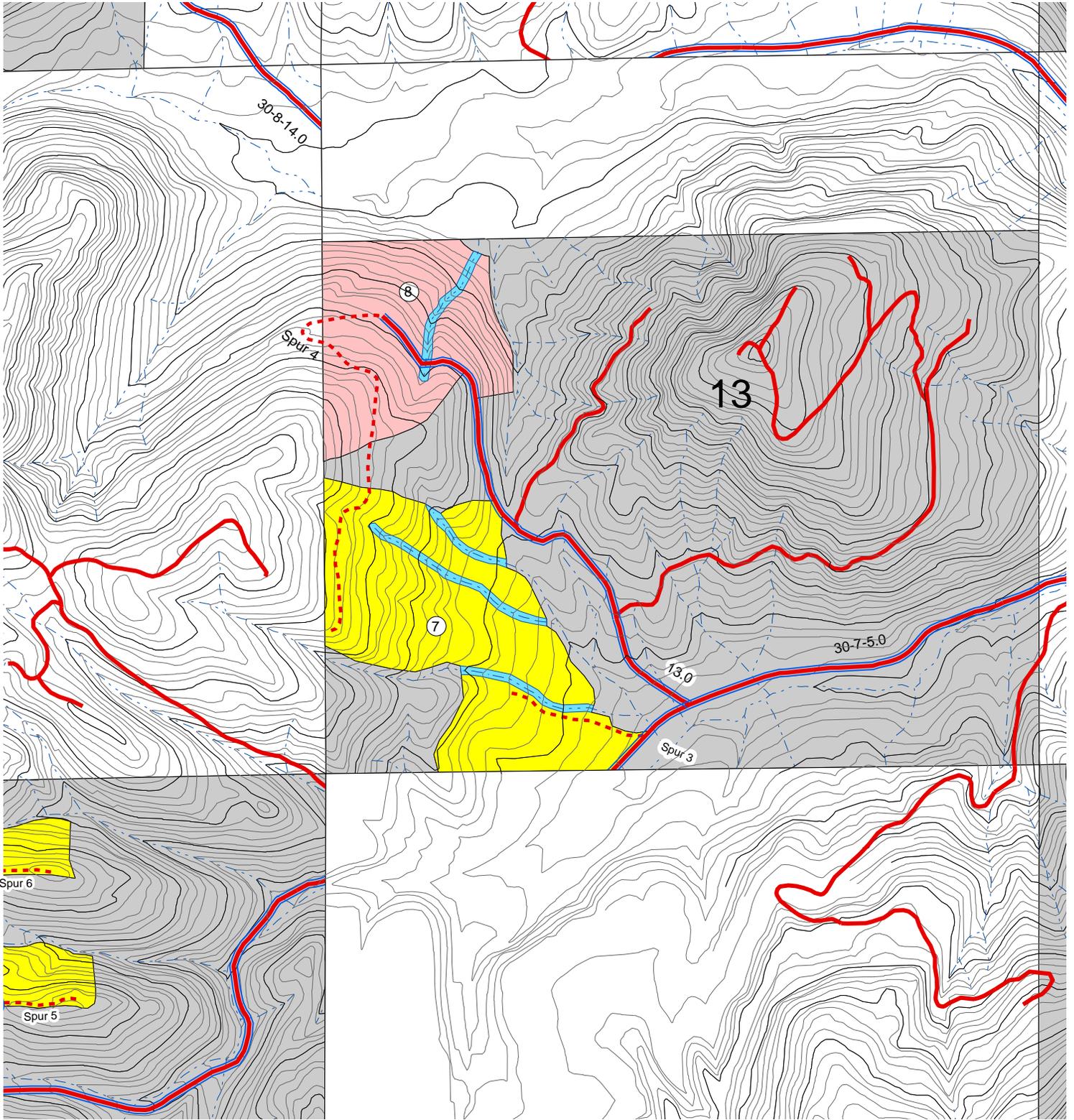
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- XXX** Trees Marked For Cutting In The Reserve Area
- Existing Road
- Construct, Decommission
- Stream
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OLLY CAT

Density Management



T30S, R8W
Willamette Meridian, Douglas Co., OR.

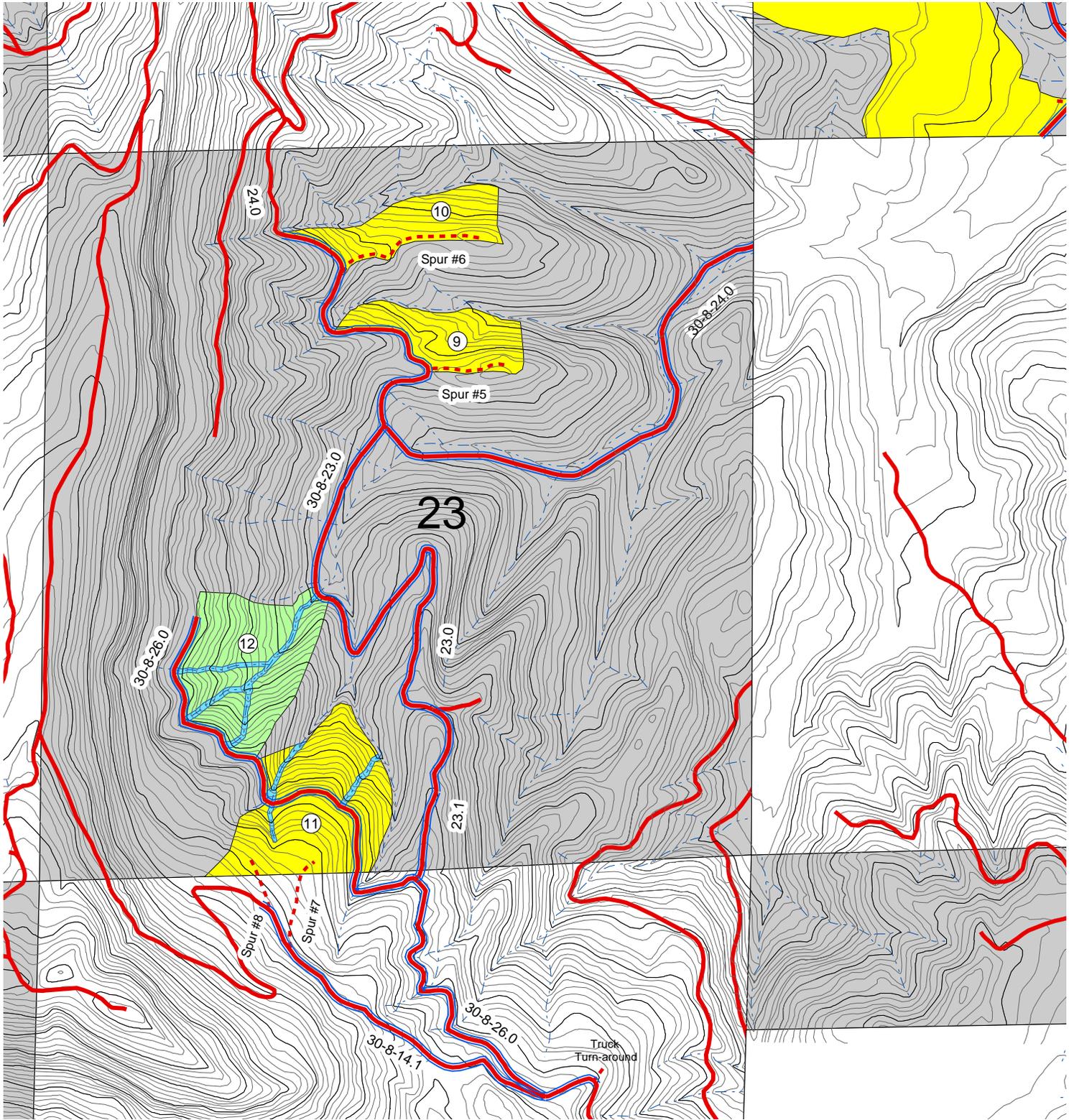
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- Existing Road
- Construct, Decommission
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour
- Heavy Thinning Area
- Moderate Thinning Area
- Light Thinning Area
- No Harvest Riparian Buffer
- BLM (O&C) Land
- BLM (PD) Land
- Non-BLM Land

OLLY CAT

Density Management



- County Road
- Existing Road
- Renovate, Rock
- Renovate, Decommission
- Construct, Decommission
- Stream
- 20 ft. Contour
- 100 ft. Contour

- Heavy Thinning Area
- Moderate Thinning Area
- Light Thinning Area
- No Harvest Riparian Buffer
- BLM (O&C) Land
- BLM (PD) Land
- Non-BLM Land

T30S, R8W

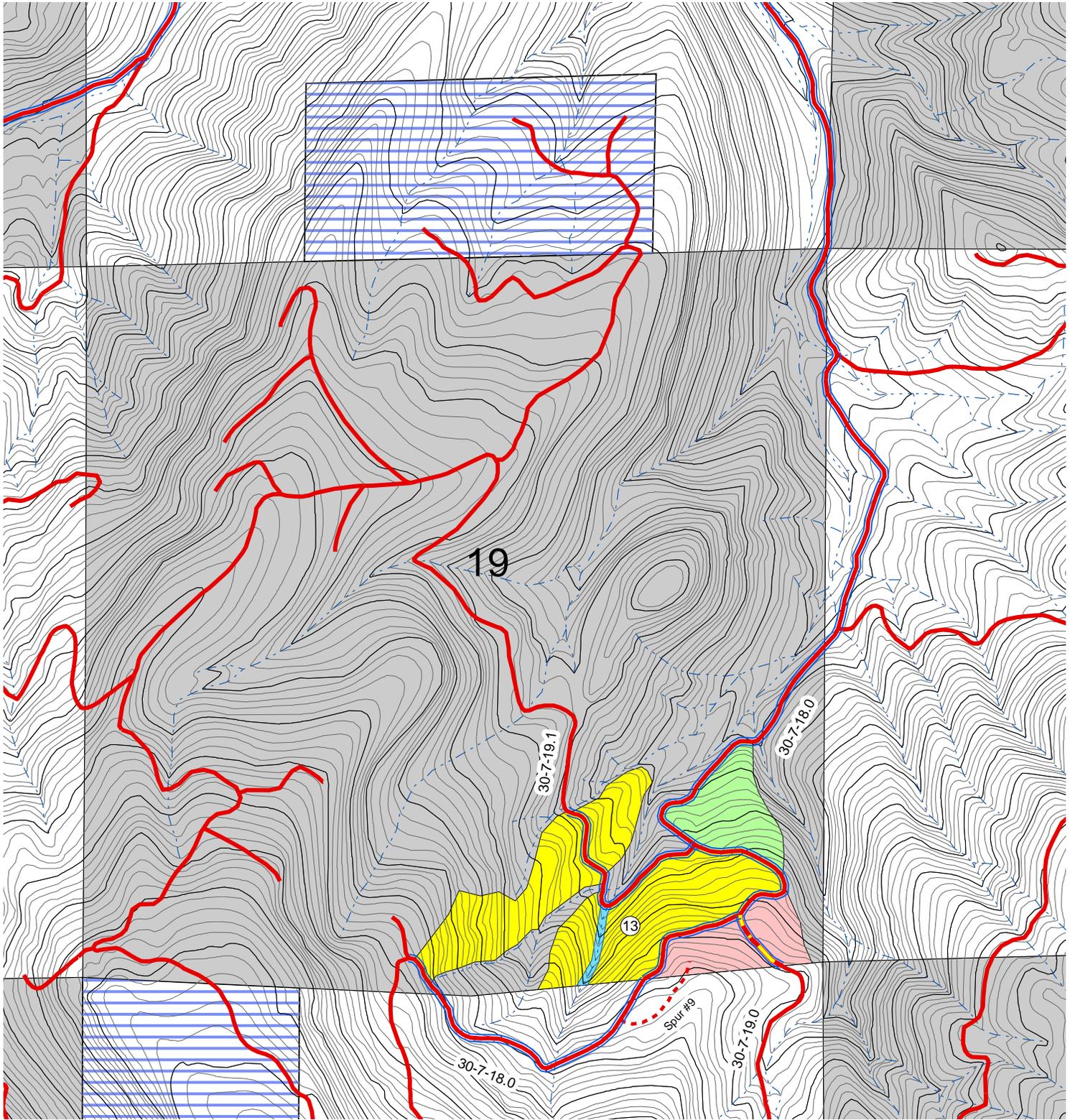
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OLLY CAT

Density Management



T30S, R7W
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- Existing Road
- Renovate, Decommission
- Construct, Decommission
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