

## Categorical Exclusion Documentation

### A. Background

**BLM Office:** Marys Peak Resource Area    **Lease/Serial/Case File No:** N/A

Categorical Exclusion Number: DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2015-0003-CX    Date: April 20, 2015

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Ice Damage Salvage in Benton County

**Location of Proposed Action:** T. 14 S., R. 6 W., Section 17 and T. 15 S., R. 6 W., Section 5, Willamette Meridian. Benton County, Oregon.

**Land Use Allocation(s):** Matrix (General Forest Management Area)

#### **Description of Proposed Action:**

Much of western Oregon was hit with severe wind and ice storms in late 2014. The BLM will be conducting salvage harvest in two areas affected by the storms within Benton County (Figure 1). The two projects, the Got Hammered and Second Chance salvage sales, are within areas that have been previously harvested. Both sales are within the Matrix (General Forest Management Area) land use allocation, within mid-seral forest stands approximately 70 years of age. A minor portion of the Riparian Reserves along existing roads may be subject to hazard tree removal.

Renovation will occur on approximately eight miles of existing roads. Renovation work will consist of grading, maintaining drainage, spot rocking, and keeping ditches and catch basins clear of debris. No road construction will occur. Additional design features to ensure the objectives of the Matrix and Riparian Reserves are met will be applied to this project (pp. 4–6 of this CX).

#### **Second Chance**

This salvage sale is within the former Super Hammer and Glen Hammer timber sales, which were implemented in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This project consists of salvage within and adjacent to existing roads (Figure 2). The purpose of this salvage is to maintain existing roads, reestablish administrative access to the area, and to improve public safety<sup>1</sup>.

Along existing roads, standing trees determined to be a hazard and to have a possibility of reaching the road (generally within 50 feet of each side of the road) will be harvested. In addition, windthrown trees currently lying within and across road will be harvested. Equipment will operate from existing roads. Approximately 110 trees averaging 12 inches DBH will be harvested.

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<sup>1</sup> While this area is typically closed to motor vehicles, it is used recreationally for hiking and mushroom picking.

## **Got Hammered**

This sale consists of two components: salvage within a contiguous 16 acre block of mid-seral forest and roadside hazard tree removal (Figure 3).

Within the 16 acre unit: This unit is within the bounds of the Mainline II timber sale, which was implemented between 2008 and 2011. All harvest within this 16 acre unit is within the Matrix land use allocation; the BLM applied full Riparian Reserve buffers to an adjacent stream such that no harvest is within the Riparian Reserves. Recently damaged and snapped out trees with low vigor and crown (generally less than 20 percent) will be harvested. Damaged conifer trees up to 30 inches DBH will be harvested. Trees will be harvested by ground-based yarding methods. Approximately 200 trees averaging 22 inches DBH will be harvested.

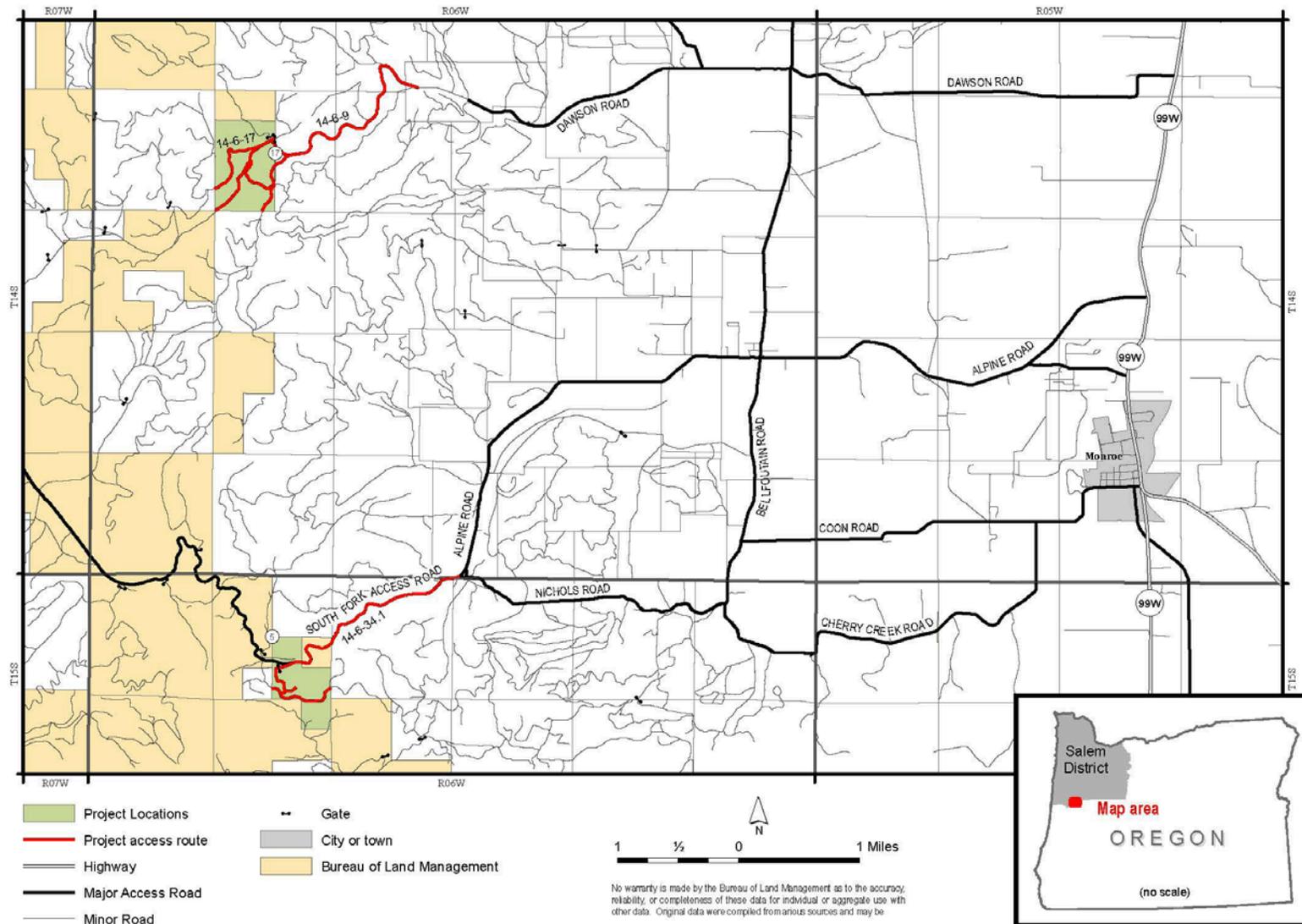
Only currently standing trees as described above will be harvested. Tops and other coarse woody debris currently on the ground (regardless of decay class) will remain on site. Older snags, such as those with visible conks, will remain standing unless determined to be an imminent safety hazard.

Roadside hazard tree removal: Along existing roads in the area (Figure 3), selected trees will be harvested when determined to be a hazard and to have the possibility of reaching the road (generally within 50 feet of each side of the road). Healthy, vigorous trees along the road will be reserved from harvest. The purpose of this component of the project is to maintain existing roads and improve administrative access and public safety.

Harvest within the Riparian Reserves will be limited and will only occur under the following conditions:

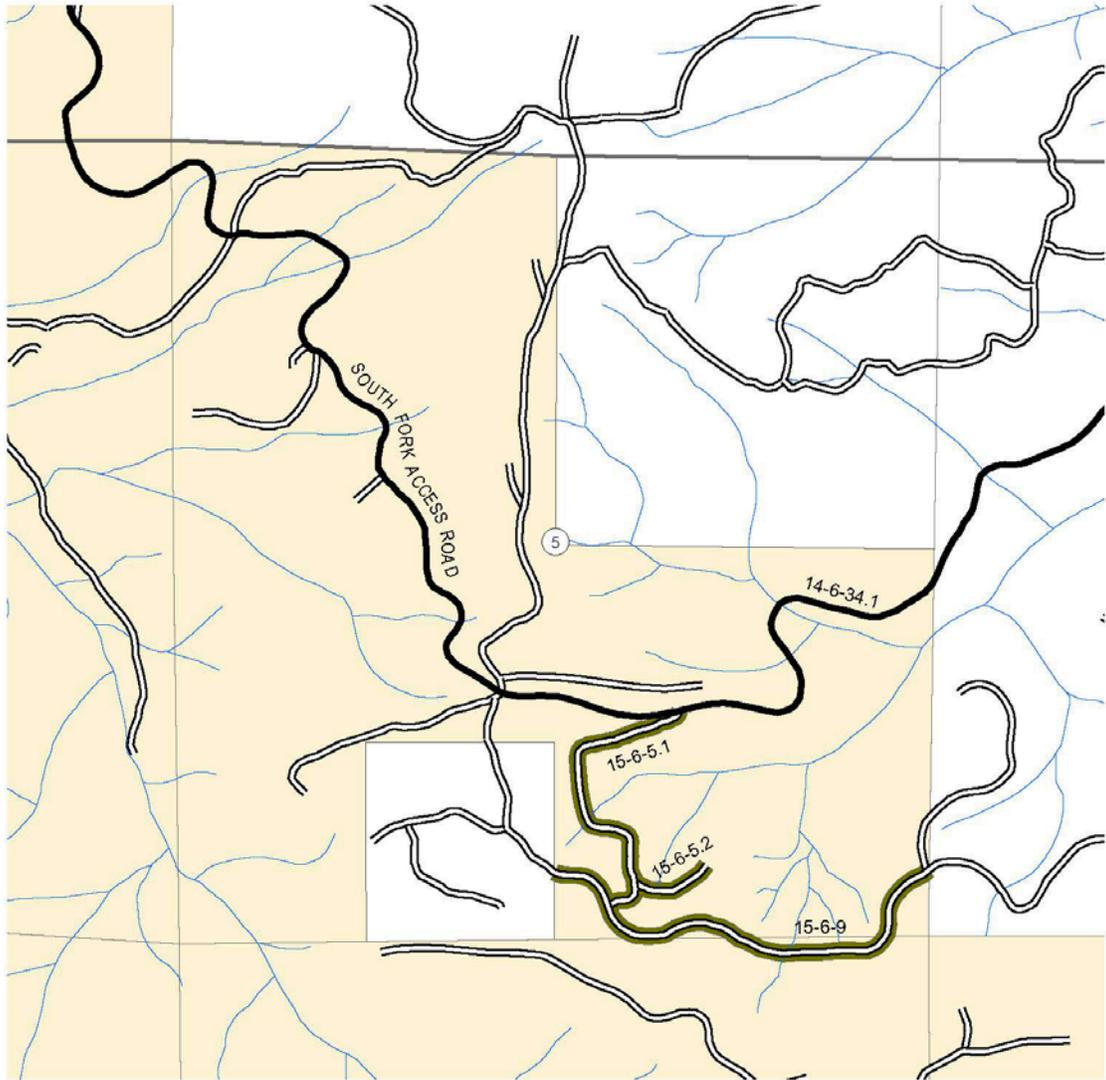
- Trees are damaged or are otherwise determined to be likely or imminent hazards
- Trees are within the road prism
- Trees could be felled towards the road and be removed by equipment operating from the existing road. Full suspension will be required.

**Figure 1. Location Map**



**Figure 2. Second Chance Salvage**

T. 15 S., R. 6 W., Section 5, W.M.



-  Second Chance roadside hazard tree removal
-  Major access road
-  Other existing road

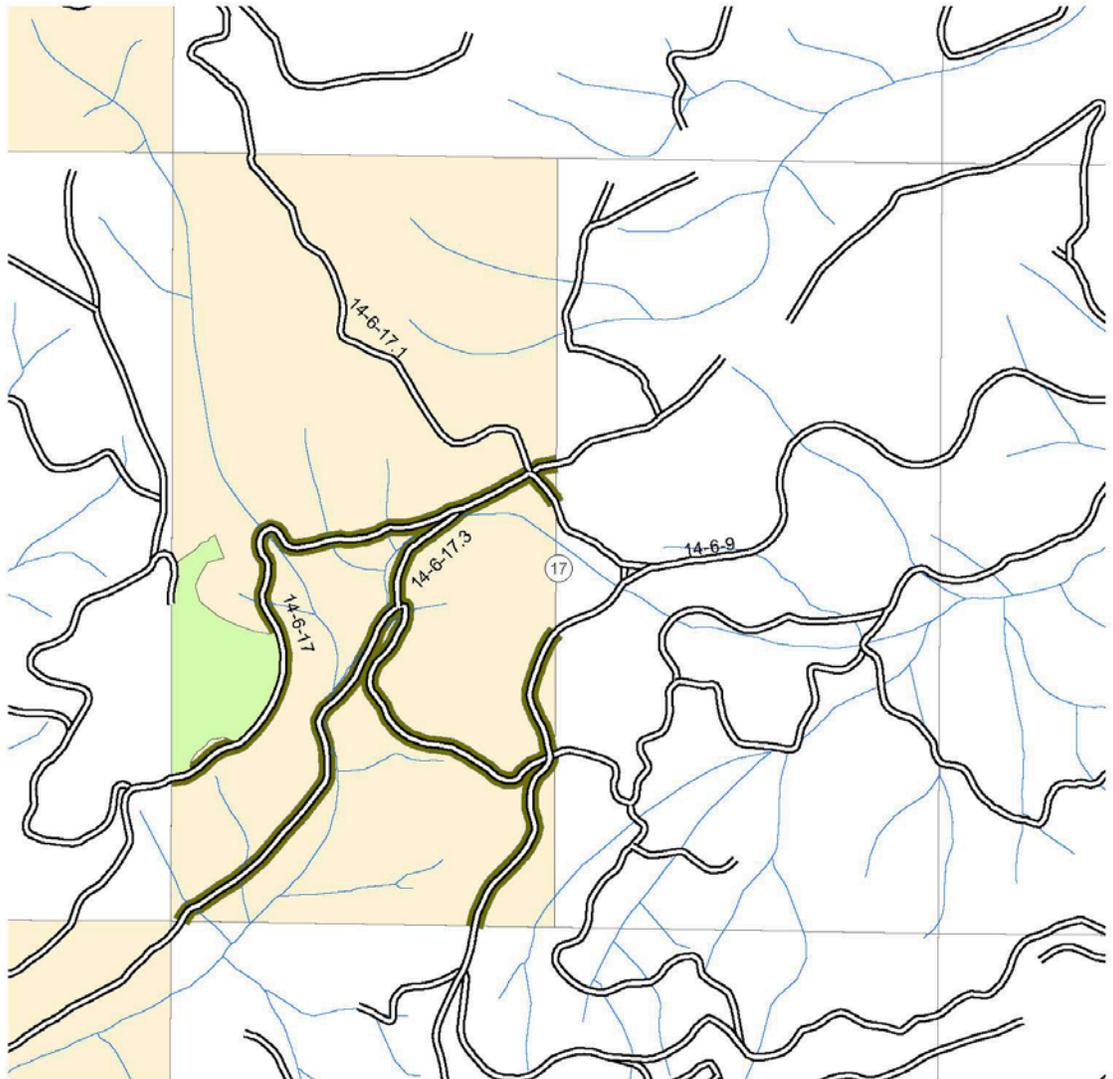
-  Bureau of Land Management administered land



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.

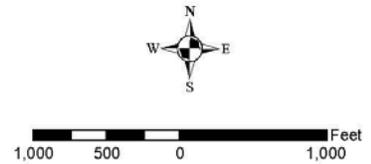
**Figure 3. Got Hammered Salvage**

T. 14 S., R., 6 W., Section 17, W.M.



- Got Hammered ground-based yarding area
- Got Hammered roadside hazard tree removal
- Other existing road
- Bureau of Land Management administered land

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**B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

**Land Use Plan Conformance:** These projects are in conformance with the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (RMP), dated May 1995, as amended, and directs the following to:

“Provide a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products and provide for salvage harvest of timber killed or damaged by events such as wildfire, windstorms, insects, or disease, consistent with management objectives for other resources.” RMP p. 46.

“Develop and maintain a transportation system that serves the needs of users in an environmentally sound manner.” RMP p. 62.

**C. Compliance with NEPA**

The project is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, C(8), which allows for “salvaging dead or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 mile of temporary road construction.”

**Table 1. Season of Operation or Operating Conditions**

Season of Operation or Operating Conditions	Applies to Operation	Objective
During periods of low soil moisture <sup>2</sup> , generally July 15 to October 15	Ground-based yarding (Tractor)	Minimize soil erosion and compaction
During periods of low soil moisture, generally June 15 to October 31	Ground-based yarding (Harvester/Forwarder) and (Hydraulic Loader) and machine chipping and/or piling	Minimize soil erosion and compaction
During periods of low soil moisture, generally May 1 to October 31	Road renovation	Minimize soil erosion
Generally year round	Timber hauling will be allowed year-round on rock-surfaced roads except where the surface is deeply rutted or covered by a layer of mud and where runoff is causing a visible increase in turbidity to adjacent streams.	Minimize soil erosion and stream sedimentation

**Project Design Features**

To minimize the risk of adverse effects to the environment, the project design features listed

<sup>2</sup> Low soil moisture ranges between 15 and 25 percent, depending on soil type. Actual conditions supersede calendar dates in determining operational periods.

below will be applied to this project.

**To meet the objectives of the Riparian Reserves**

- No refueling will be allowed within 100 feet of any standing or running water (BMPs: SW 8, 9 and SP 1)
- No yarding will be permitted in or through the Riparian Reserves within the 16 acre Got Hammered unit.
- In roadside hazard tree removal areas, healthy, vigorous green trees will be reserved from harvest.

**To protect Special Status Species**

- The resource area biologist and/or botanist will be notified if any Bureau special status botanical, fungal, or animal species are found occupying any portion of the trees to be cut and removed. If the species is a federally listed ESA species, known trees will be withdrawn from any timber harvesting activity. If the species is other than a federal listed ESA species, then appropriate mitigation action will be taken.

**To protect and enhance stand diversity and maintain coarse woody debris conditions**

- Recommendations for the Matrix land use allocation will be followed to provide sufficient levels of CWD for this stand type, while mitigating potential for subsequent beetle damage to adjacent stands by:
  - Reserving (leaving on site) trees within the Riparian Reserves adjacent to the 16 acre Got Hammered unit,
  - Retaining all existing down CWD (including fresh snap outs and logs previously in place) and fresh snags (decay class 1) that are over 30 inches (few expected), and
  - Retaining viable green trees that are not root-sprung and are not deemed a safety hazard.
  - Retaining two snags per acre.
- Replant treated area with appropriate mix of native conifer species to potentially include disease resistant and non-host species.

**To contain and/or reduce noxious weed infestations on BLM-managed lands using an integrated pest management approach**

- Soil disrupting equipment and other heavy equipment or transportation vehicles (e.g., low-boys and trailers) would be required to be clean and free of dirt and vegetation prior to arriving on BLM-managed lands as directed by the authorized officer (SP 1).
- Large areas of exposed mineral soil, as determined by the authorized officer, will be grass sown with Oregon Certified (blue tagged) red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) at a rate equal to 40 pounds per acre or sown/planted with other native species as approved by the resource area botanist. Prior to sowing any seed, the seed label and blue tag will be given to the resource area botanist for approval (R 97).

**To protect cultural resources**

- The project area occurs within the Coast Range Physiographic Province. Survey techniques are based on those described in Appendix D of the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resource on Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Oregon. A post-project survey would be conducted according to standards based on slope defined in the Protocol appendix.
- If any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) is discovered during project activities all operations in the immediate area of such discovery shall be suspended until an evaluation of the discovery can be made by a professional archaeologist to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values.

**To provide for public safety**

- The project area may be posted with signs to notify the public of harvest activities.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate 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 apply<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2. Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review**

<i>Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<p><b>a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> All activities will be conducted in a forested location outside of population centers and will conform to established Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety.</p>		No
<p><b>b) 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, floodplains, national monuments, migratory birds, other ecologically significant or critical areas?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The project will not have significant impacts on the aforementioned resources or characteristics. The project is limited to a small area outside of sensitive natural and cultural areas.</p>		No
<p><b>c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2) (E)]?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The effects of the proposed action are not controversial and there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Past experience has shown that the environmental effects of the proposed project are not highly controversial. The ROD/RMP established the land use allocation and goals for the affected lands. As such, there is no unresolved conflict regarding other uses of these resources.</p>		No

<sup>3</sup> Table 2 includes a discussion of these extraordinary circumstances and includes cumulative effects considerations.

<i>Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<p><b>d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Experience from this type of activity has shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique, or unknown environmental risks.</p>		No
<p><b>e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed project is addressed and authorized under the existing ROD/RMP, and as such, this project will represent implementation of that land use plan decision, not a decision in principle on future actions.</p>		No
<p><b>f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Approximately two air miles from both salvage areas, the BLM has proposed the Rainbow Ridge timber sale. The project would conduct both regeneration and thinning harvest on approximately 140 acres in the Matrix and Riparian Reserves land use allocations. This project also includes approximately 20 acres of ice-damaged trees from the same late 2014 storm. Given the very limited magnitude of activities proposed in this salvage CX (roadside salvage, avoidance of riparian areas), and the several other affected areas in the vicinity that will remain untreated, there is no indication that cumulative effects would result from the combination of the Rainbow Ridge project and the activities proposed in this CX.</p>		No
<p><b>g) 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?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> No listed or eligible National Register Properties are within the project area.</p>		No
<p><b>h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p><b>Fisheries:</b> The proposed actions associated with the salvage projects are not expected to cause any effects to the listed fish or listed critical habitat in the Upper Alsea River or Marys River Watersheds. Based on project location and project activities the proposed projects are considered 'no effect' to on Oregon Coast Coho Salmon, Upper Willamette River (UWR) Steelhead, and UWR Chinook Salmon. This 'no effect' determination is based on the distance upstream of the project area from ESA listed fish habitat (3 to 26 miles). Consultation with NMFS is not required for UWR steelhead for these projects.</p> <p>Protection of EFH as described by the Magnuson/Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act and consultation with NOAA-NMFS is required for all projects which may adversely affect EFH of coho or Chinook salmon. The proposed salvage projects are not expected to affect EFH due to distance of all activities associated with the salvage project activities from occupied habitat.</p> <p><b>Wildlife:</b></p> <p>The proposed action is not considered suitable habitat for spotted owls or marbled</p>		No

<i>Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<p>murrelets, and is not within designated critical habitat for these species. There are no active spotted owl sites or marbled murrelet sites in the vicinity of the proposed action. The proposed action would have no effect on threatened or endangered (T&amp;E) wildlife species and their designated critical habitat.</p> <p><b>Botany:</b> The project area occurs in previous project areas that were surveyed for T&amp;E and other bureau special status botanical and fungal species. There are no known sites of any T&amp;E or bureau special status species within the project area.</p>		
<p><b>i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed action follows all known Federal, State, local, Tribal laws, or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.</p>		No
<p><b>j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed action is not anticipated to have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.</p>		No
<p><b>k) 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)?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> There are no such sites within the area.</p>		No
<p><b>l) 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)?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The risk rating for the long-term establishment of noxious weeds through the implementation of this project is low because: a) the project area is limited in size, b) the project area will be monitored for the establishment of noxious weed species, c) the resource area has a weed management plan in place which allows for control of non-native and noxious weed species and d) the Authorized Officer would require sowing grass seed on mineral soil areas which would reduce the amount of potential noxious weed habitat.</p>		No

#### **D. Interdisciplinary Team Review and Signature**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Specialty</b>
Ron Exeter	Botanist
Douglass Fitting	Hydrology and soils
Kevin Foster	Forester
Scott Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist
Stefanie Larew	NEPA Coordinator
Mellissa Rutkowski	Engineering
Scott Snedaker	Fish Biologist
Heather Ulrich	Archaeologist
Stephanie Wessell	Silviculturist

**Authorized Official:** /s/ Rich Hatfield Date: April 20, 2015

**Name:** Rich Hatfield

**Title:** Marys Peak Field Manager

**Contact Person:** For additional information concerning this CX, contact Stefanie Larew, Natural Resource Specialist, Salem District Office Bureau of Land Management, 1717 Fabry Rd. SE, Salem, Oregon at (503) 375-5601.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
SALEM DISTRICT, MARYS PEAK RESOURCE AREA**

**Decision Record**

Based on the attached categorical exclusion (DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2015-0003-CX), I have determined that the proposed action, Ice Damage Salvage in Benton County, involves no significant impacts to the human environment and requires no further environmental analysis.

It is my decision to authorize salvage of ice damaged stands as described in the attached categorical exclusion.

**Administrative Remedy:** The forest management decision to be made on the action described in this categorical exclusion is subject to protest under 43 CFR subpart 5003. Under 43 CFR 5003.2 subsection (b), a notice of decision will be published in local newspaper(s), and this notice shall constitute the decision document. Under 43 CFR 5003.3 subsection (a), protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision. The notice of this decision will appear in the Benton County Gazette-Times newspaper on or around April 22, 2015. Under 43 CFR 5003.3 (b), protests filed with the authorized officer shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision. A decision on this protest would be subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, although, under 43 CFR 5003.1 subsection (a), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of a decision governing or relating to forest management under 43 CFR 5003.2 or 5003.3.

**Implementation:** The projects will be offered for sale in May 2015.

**Contact Person:** For additional information concerning this CX, contact Stefanie Larew, Natural Resource Specialist, Bureau of Land Management, 1717 Fabry Rd. SE Salem, Oregon at (503) 375-5601.

**Authorized Official:** /s/ Rich Hatfield Date: April 20, 2015

**Name:** Rich Hatfield

**Title:** Marys Peak Field Manager