

# **Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan**

## **Final Decision and Decision Rationale**

**Environmental Assessment Number OR-080-08-16**



**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Salem District  
Multnomah and Clackamas Counties, Oregon**

**T1-3S., R. 4-7E.; W.M. within the Sandy River Basin**

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BLM/OR/WA/AE-08/089-1792

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# Decision Record

## Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis for the Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan, which is documented in the *FY 2008 Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan Environmental Assessment* (2008 EA, # OR080-08-16) and the associated project file. This document guides the future management of resources within the Sandy River Basin for the next 15 years. An integrated approach to resource management has been taken that would preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the region through the enhancement and restoration of natural resource values while providing complementary recreation opportunities and implementing the Salem District Resource Management Plan (December 2008). This management plan addresses all BLM managed resources within the Sandy River Basin. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on August 19, 2008 and the EA and FONSI were then made available for public review. A summary of public involvement, consultation and coordination can be found on page XVII of this Decision Record.

## Decision

I have decided to implement the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) of the Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan as described in the EA (EA pp. 32-33, 51-54) with modifications to land use allocations and selected recreation actions. The changes in land use allocation are due to the approval of the 2008 Salem District RMP (December 2008). The changes to selected recreation actions are based on public comment. The modifications are described in Decision Record pages xx-xxii.

This decision is based on site-specific analysis contained in the *FY 2008 Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan Environmental Assessment* (EA # OR080-08-16), the supporting project record, public comment, and management recommendations contained in the *Sandy River Watershed Analysis*. The Decision, designed under the 1995 Salem District Resource Management Plan, is in conformance with the Salem District Resource Management Plan, December 2008 (RMP). This Decision is hereafter referred to as the “selected action”.

Table 1 describes the selected action. This table outlines the general goal and intent of the selected Action. Management direction for each resource is provided across land use allocations.

**Table 1: Summary of Selected Action**

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
	<b>General Goal</b>	Goal: Preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the region through the enhancement and restoration of natural resource values while providing complementary recreation opportunities and managing lands in accordance with the Salem RMP. Manage for selected activities and experiences while not degrading the natural resources on which they depend. (EA section 2.2)

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
	<b>Intent</b>	<b>Intent:</b> Improve ecosystem health as well as development of multiple- use recreation opportunities. Enhance visitor experience and enjoyment of the area's characteristics. In response to monitoring, provide appropriate management actions to preserve ecological health as well as visitor experience. Ensure a balanced approach to resource management resulting in the least conflict between uses.
<b>All Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Land Acquisition/ Conservation Easements</b>	Pursue land acquisitions and easements within Land and Water Conservation Fund planning area as outlined in the 2002 Sandy River Land Acquisitions EA. Acquisitions dependent upon available funds and willing land owners. Continue to work with non-profit partners and look for opportunities to work with other federal and state agencies.
	<b>Rights-Of-Way (ROW)</b>	Review and approve ROW proposals on a case by case basis. Proposals are subject to additional mitigation measures to reduce visual impacts.
	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Experience and Opportunity Summary</i>	Provide a balance of development and dispersed recreation, employing experience zones to realize specific outcomes. Enhance recreation opportunities through the improvement of public access including a moderate level of new facilities and trails development. Balance developed and dispersed recreational opportunities through three recreation experience zones. Develop two day use recreation sites.
	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Public Access and Facility Development</i>	Improve public access to river and upland areas while implementing management actions to reduce or avoid resource impacts. Select and implement Conceptual Site Plan D for both the Marmot and Sandy/Salmon sites (EA sections 5.3 and 5.4). Providing no designated overnight camping opportunities. Develop a water trail plan to improve public access with a focus on limiting adverse effects to other resources.
	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Trail Development</i>	Develop 22-25 miles of non-motorized multiple use trails as outlined in Trail Development Plan D, with opportunities to expand based on user demand. Establish Adopt-a-Trail agreements with user groups to assist with trail construction and maintenance.
	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Experience Zones</i>	Develop three recreation experience zones (Developed, Front Country, and Primitive). Experience zones will provide a balanced approach to recreation management.
	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Management and Monitoring</i>	Develop a comprehensive management and visitor information strategy to address resource protection, visitor experience, and user conflict. Implement a comprehensive public outreach program. Increased levels of management and agency patrols would be implemented for river and upland areas based on use. Develop standards and guidelines for issuing Special Recreation Permits to facilitate a balance, subject to monitoring, between resource values and recreational use.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
<b>All Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Recreation:</b> <i>Interpretive Facilities, Services and Public Information</i>	Complete a comprehensive interagency interpretation/public information and education plan to coordinate efforts of key agencies and organizations (signing, interpretation, interpretive trails, brochures etc). Work with other agencies within the Basin to coordinate public information and direct visitor access where possible.
	<b>Soils</b>	Minimize loss of soil productivity and prevent entry of sediment and bacteria into waterways. Apply best management practices (BMPs) to all surface disturbing activities. Maintain existing recreation trails and facilities, and design and implement proposed trails and facilities to avoid unmitigated erosion and delivery of sediment of bacteria to stream channels. Increase BMP implementation monitoring as necessary as level of trail and human use increases, following guidelines in current Resource Management Plan.
	<b>Botany/ Non-Native Invasive Plants</b>	Conduct additional inventory and monitoring in areas most heavily impacted by public use. Inventory areas identified under ACEC management plans, ongoing studies, and where proposed projects would occur. Comply with policies and regulations of BLM Special Status Species, integrated weed management, and the Salem District RMP on habitat disturbing actions initiated by the BLM. Work with colleges and universities to conduct habitat and population monitoring studies. Work with partners and willing landowners to inventory and treat non-native invasive species. Develop a comprehensive public outreach plan to educate recreationists on the impact of invasive non-native species. Increased opportunities for restoration efforts and volunteer participation. Establish re-vegetation plans consistent with proposed recreation facility design plans. Continue to work with Sandy River Basin Invasive Species Control Group.
	<b>Wildlife</b>	Manage old-growth conifer forest, riparian areas, and wetlands under the current Salem District RMP, State and local regulations. Continue to cooperate with USFWS concerning T&E species as required by law prior to any management action potentially effecting habitat or populations. Investigate occurrences of federally protected special status species on federal lands, incidental to other BLM wildlife monitoring, with increased levels of monitoring as visitor use of recreation facilities and trails increases. Place special emphasis on habitat protection and restoration projects such as non-native vegetation treatment, snag creation, and thinning of dense forest stands. Consider restricting recreational use to reduce disturbance to wildlife during critical seasons. Work with landowners to limit motorized vehicle access to certain areas to decrease disturbance. Manage federally protected and special status species under the terms of the Endangered Species Act, Salem District RMP, and BLM policy.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
<b>All Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Fire</b>	Conduct fuel hazard reduction treatments across the landscape in conjunction with proposed recreation development. Increase treatments in conjunction with increased vegetation management areas. Evaluate the need for a shaded fuel break along the south edge of the Little Sandy Watershed, providing a fuel break for fire movement in or out of the Bull Run Management Unit.
	<b>Cultural Resources</b>	Select sites to manage for public visitation and interpretation. Determine NRHP eligibility for all identified sites. Develop cultural resource interpretive efforts in conjunction with a Basin-wide interpretation plan. Conduct a cultural inventory consistent with proposed trail and facility development. Manage identified cultural sites for scientific and conservation purposes as well as interpretation.
	<b>Visual Resource Management</b>	Maintain or improve scenic values throughout the planning area, while allowing for modification and changes to occur to meet other resource objectives. Develop and incorporate appropriate mitigation into project design in accordance with assigned VRM objectives. Minimize impacts to VRM goals and objectives on identified sites through facility design plans.
	<b>Road and Travel Management</b>	Inventory existing roads in planning area and prioritize rehabilitation projects as necessary.
	<b>Hydro - Quantity - Water Rights</b>	As acquired lands provide certified valid water rights, work with Oregon Water Resource Department in considering the need for instream water rights in the Basin compared to BLM's need for facility development and instream rights on BLM lands.
<b>Timber Management Areas (TMA)</b> (formerly General Forest Management Areas and Connectivity) <b>and Riparian Management Areas (RMA)</b> (formerly Riparian Reserve LUA)	<b>Vegetation Management- pre-commercial treatments</b>	Continue pre-commercial silvicultural treatments that can include but are not limited to: pre-commercial thinning, brushing, girdling, weed control and removal.
	<b>Vegetation Management- Commercial treatments</b>	Manage vegetation according to the direction given in the Salem District RMP in order to improve forest health, maintain a supply of timber on Timber Management Area (TMA) lands, which include commercial thinning and regeneration harvest treatments.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
<b>Timber Management Areas (TMA) and Riparian Management Areas (RMA)</b>	<b>Vegetation Management-Density management treatments</b>	Maintain or improve scenic qualities and habitat function in Riparian Management Areas (RMAs) and continue density management treatments in RMAs for habitat improvement, as appropriate.
	<b>Water Quality - Fish habitat - Water temperature</b>	Provide stand conditions in the Riparian Management Areas which promote proper functioning condition for water quality and aquatic habitat. Adhere to Total Maximum Daily Load Shade Targets for maintenance or improvement of water temperature through application of Riparian Management Areas along stream channels. Conduct silvicultural treatments including thinning in the secondary shade zone with the primary goal of riparian and aquatic health through development of large trees, favoring treatments on those streams with fish that do not meet TMDL shade targets.
	<b>Water Quality - WQRP</b>	Complete a Water Quality Restoration. Identify and prioritize potential restoration opportunities considering existing efforts such as Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (SRP,2007).
	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat</b>	Provide long-term large wood for proper functioning condition of riparian and aquatic habitat. Apply best management practices (BMPs) to all surface disturbing activities to reduce potential for sedimentation and degradation of fish habitat. (As per current RMP). Retain commercial trees, snags and coarse wood in landslide areas associated with stream channels to provide for long term wood recruitment. Plan for silvicultural treatments including thinning, where dense young sapling stands occur in "wood source areas", to promote long term large wood development and transport to downstream channels. Apply bio-engineering methods to reduce surface and bank erosion where roads impinge on stream banks. Prioritize treatments provided in implementation plan to favor long-term large wood for streams with high intrinsic potential for fish and where chronic sediment inputs occur.
	<b>Hydro - Water Quality - Bacteria</b>	As part of Water Quality Restoration Plan, address both bacteria and temperature for the BLM lands in the Basin, and identify potential bacteria sources and BMP's controlling bacteria sources.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
<b>National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)/ Congressionally Designated – eligible, suitable and designated Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>	<b>Vegetation Restoration and Habitat improvement treatments</b>	Improve stand health, scenic qualities, and terrestrial and riparian habitat through vegetation management. Young sapling silvicultural treatments would continue. Restoration activities would be considered in overstocked, conifer dominated stands for purposes other than timber production. These activities can include, but are not limited to: Stewardship or service contracts which may or may not include the removal of trees or brush from the project area. Girdling, weed removal, and fuels reduction projects would be considered where visual resources will not be impaired.
<b>National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS)/ Congressionally Designated – eligible, suitable and designated Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat - Water Temperature</b>	Provide stand conditions in the Riparian Management Areas which promote proper functioning for water quality and aquatic habitat. Adhere to Total Maximum Daily Load Shade Targets for maintenance or improvement of water temperature through application of Riparian Management Areas along perennial stream channels. Consider restoration thinning and young sapling silvicultural management of conifer in the secondary shade zone of perennial stream riparian areas would be considered where channels are lacking large wood for fish habitat and channel processes and in wood source areas. Treatment priority will be given to those streams with existing or potential fish presences which do not meet TMDL shade targets. Design of treatments would not detract from visual resource quality.
	<b>Channel and Floodplain Function - Fish Habitat</b>	Identify and prioritize potential restoration opportunities considering existing efforts such as Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (SRP, 2007) and the need for visual resource protection in order to provide in-channel conditions that provide proper channel and floodplain function and promote aquatic habitat.
	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat</b>	Prioritize road decommissioning and undesignated trail decommissioning based on risk of failure, impacts to water quality, impacts to ESA habitat and visual enhancement.
	<b>Water Quality-Fish Habitat</b>	Replace culverts as needed to maintain the present road system using BMPs for re-vegetation and erosion control. Design culverts for the 100 year flood event including allowance for bedload and small floatable debris to avoid diversion. Match culvert width to channel bankfull width and fish passage. Consider culvert width sized for bank full flows plus, where retention of streamside corridor is priority.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
<b>NLCS/Congressionally Designated-Mt. Hood Corridor</b>	<b>General Management</b>	All lands located in Townships 2 and 3 South, Ranges 6 and 7 East, which can be seen from the right-of-way of U.S. Highway 26, shall be managed for other resource values, planned and conducted for purposes other than timber harvest, so as not to impair the scenic qualities of the area. Timber cutting will only be conducted on these lands following a resource-damaging catastrophic event. Such cutting may only be conducted to achieve the following resource management objectives, in compliance with the current land use plans: 1.) To maintain safe conditions for the visiting public. 2.) To control the continued spread of forest fire; 3.) For activities related to administration of the Mt. Hood Corridor lands; or 4.) For removal of hazard trees along trails and roadways.
<b>NLCS/Congressionally Designated – Bull Run Watershed Management Unit</b>	<b>General Management</b>	Protect and enhance water quality on BLM-administered lands. Exclude timber harvesting, except as necessary to protect or enhance water quality; or except as necessary for the construction, expansion, protection, or maintenance of facilities for either a municipal water supply or energy transmission.
<b>Sandy River ACEC/Administratively Withdrawn (formerly District Designated Reserve )</b>	<b>Vegetation - Young sampling silvicultural treatments and habitat improvement</b>	Continue silvicultural treatments in order to improve forest stand health as well as terrestrial and riparian habitat and function. These can include but are not limited to: pre-commercial thinning, brushing, girdling, and weed control and removal.
	<b>Vegetation - Commercial Thinning, Density Management treatments and habitat improvement</b>	Implement density management treatments including the thinning of mid-seral forested stands.

<b>Selected Action</b>		
<b>Land Use Allocations</b>	<b>Resource or Resource Use</b>	<b>Under the Selected Action, the BLM will:</b>
	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat - Young sampling silvicultural treatments and habitat improvement</b>	Adhere to Total Maximum Daily Load Shade Targets in applying vegetation management along perennial stream channels. Apply intermittent stream Riparian Management Areas as per the RMP. Treatments in the secondary shade zone of perennial stream riparian areas will be priority where TMDL targets are not being attained and channels are lacking large wood. In addition, vegetation management prescriptions would be considered in potential wood source areas where the associated channels are lacking large wood for fish habitat and channel processes. Consideration for treatment priority given to those streams with existing or potential fish presences that do not meet TMDL shade targets. Active management in the secondary shade zone and wood source areas in order to promote proper functioning condition and to improve water quality and aquatic habitat.
	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat - Commercial Thinning and habitat improvement</b>	Implement restoration-based vegetation management prescriptions in the secondary shade zone of perennial stream riparian areas where effective shade can be retained and long term large wood can be enhanced. Consider thinning in wood source areas for long term large wood recruitment. Consider as a high priority area in secondary shade zones along fish-bearing streams which are lacking target levels of large wood or in wood source areas which are tributary to channel and floodplain systems lacking large wood.
	<b>Channel, Floodplain and Riparian ACEC Function - Fish Habitat</b>	Identify potential restoration opportunities and prioritize projects identified in existing efforts such as Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (SRP, 2007) and those projects identified for water quality restoration.
<b>Sandy River ACEC</b>	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat</b>	Develop a long term restoration plan for road decommissioning and disturbed areas on acquired lands. Priorities should include risk of failure (water quality impacts), impact to fish habitat (including ESA species) and recreational needs.
	<b>Water Quality - Fish Habitat</b>	Develop a long term restoration plan for culverts on acquired lands. Prioritize replacement and removal considering long term access needs for recreation and vegetation management along with channel and floodplain function, long term maintenance costs and fish passage.

## Alternatives Considered

The alternatives analyzed in the SRBIMP EA #OR080-08-16 were developed with input from the public and the interdisciplinary planning team. Desired conditions, management options and actions which could be used to resolve the issues were identified. Alternatives A through D varied in their approach and emphasis as to the future management of lands within the planning area. The alternatives represent four general management strategies that could be taken and remain consistent with the management objectives identified through the scoping process and refined during plan development.

### ***Alternative A: Continuation of Existing Management***

**Goal:** This “No Action Alternative” would maintain the current management of the area as guided by the Salem District Resource Management Plan (1995), the Sandy Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1992), and the Sandy Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway Management Plan (1993). All actions associated with this alternative remain consistent with requirements outlined within the above policy and guidance documents.

**Intent:** Management of resources will continue as it has in the past under a variety of jurisdictions and administrations. Current rules, regulation, management and enforcement efforts would be maintained. No change to BLM administered lands would take place. No new BLM land uses, activities, or management actions would be implemented under this alternative. This would be the NEPA no action alternative from which environmental and socio-economical effects will be analyzed. This alternative is described in the EA section 2.2.1.

### ***Alternative B***

**Goal:** Maximize the conservation of natural resources while still providing undeveloped recreational opportunities under existing laws and regulations.

**Intent:** Improve ecosystem health in identified areas while preserving the natural character of specified areas. Expand education and interpretation opportunities. Identify conservation and habitat enhancement projects throughout planning area. Provide undeveloped recreational use that does not interfere with conservation objectives. This Alternative is described in EA section 2.2.2.

### ***Alternative C***

**Goal:** Emphasizes maximizing multiple-uses and developed recreational opportunities, while protecting natural resources to the maximum extent possible. Under this alternative, recreation opportunities would be encouraged and enhanced. Recreation facilities would be developed, information and education programs improved, river access and trails improved and developed, and viewshed protection would be increased to the fullest extent possible.

**Intent:** Maximize multiple uses regarding forest restoration and management. Expand and improve developed recreation opportunities and infrastructure. Increase river and trail access points. This Alternative is described in EA sections 2.2.3.

### ***Selected Action (Alternative D)***

**Goal:** Preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the region through the enhancement and restoration of natural resource values while providing complementary recreation opportunities and implementing the Salem District Resource Management Plan (December 2008).

Manage for selected activities and experiences while not degrading the natural resources on which they depend. Alternative D is a combination of management actions from options presented in alternatives A through C.

***Intent:*** The preferred alternative would allow for the enhancement of ecosystem health and the development of additional multiple use recreational opportunities, enhancing the level of experience and enjoyment of the areas' characteristics, while recognizing that increased future use would trigger the need for increased levels of management. Monitoring for visitors' experiences and land health would determine when management actions would be required. The Selected Action is described in DR section 2.2.4.

Table 2 compares the Alternatives with regard to the Decision Factors described in EA section 2.3.

**Table 2: Comparison of Alternative by Decision Criteria/Factors (EA section 1.2.2)**

<i>Decision Criteria/ Factor (Section 1.2.2)</i>	<i>Alternative A (No Action – Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Selected Action (EA Alternative D)</i>
<i>Restores ecosystems on acquired lands</i>	<b>Partially fulfills:</b> A comprehensive restoration strategy would not be created. Current restoration projects would continue.	<b>Partially fulfills:</b> This proposed restoration strategy would maximize the conservation of natural resources, while improving land health and identify conservation or habitat enhancement projects with as little impact to the land as possible	<b>Fulfills:</b> The proposed restoration strategies for Alternatives C and D would identify and prioritize projects with the intent of improving scenic qualities, water quality and wildlife habitat. Restoration treatments would balance activities such as fuels reduction, non-native invasive species removal, and young sapling and density management thinning.	
<i>Provides a balance of meeting recreation needs while retaining the resource values recognized by special legislation and other planning efforts.</i>	<b>Does not fulfill:</b> The potential impacts of unmanaged future recreation demand would not be addressed within the planning area. No new recreational opportunities would be provided.	<b>Does not fulfill:</b> Undeveloped recreational opportunities would be provided within the planning area. Proposed facility/trail development is not expected to meet the future demands for recreation within the planning area. Unregulated/unauthorized forms of recreational use (establishment of social trails, unmanaged overnight use etc.) could result in impacts to basin-wide resources.	<b>Fulfills:</b> Developed recreational opportunities would be provided within the planning area. Amount of proposed trail miles, carrying capacity for developed recreation zones, and planned amenities for recreation facilities would provide adequate opportunities while minimizing impacts to basin wide resources.	<b>Fulfills:</b> The balance of developed and undeveloped opportunities would lead to the greatest level of resource protection while minimizing the footprint needed to provide public recreational access.
<i>Ensures balanced approach to resource management, resulting in the least conflict between uses</i>	<b>Does not fulfill:</b> A comprehensive strategy for restoring acquired lands and providing complementary recreational access would not be developed, resulting in the potential for resource damage and unregulated public uses within the basin.	<b>Partially fulfills:</b> Action alternatives B and C have varying levels of proposed management actions for providing comprehensive restoration strategies while simultaneously providing enhanced recreation access (trails and facility). Both alternatives partially fulfill this decision criterion with a varying emphasis on the level (undeveloped and developed) of proposed recreation opportunities.		<b>Fulfills:</b> Provides a balanced approach to resource management through the establishment of a comprehensive restoration strategy, while providing complementary recreation access so as to not impact the resources on which these activities depend.

<i>Decision Criteria/ Factor (Section 1.2.2)</i>	<i>Alternative A (No Action – Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Selected Action (EA Alternative D)</i>
<i>Addresses rural interface issues</i>	<b>Does not fulfill:</b> Lack of adequate recreation opportunities would lead to an increase in private property trespass, dumping and vandalism. Increased fuel loads and the lack of a comprehensive fire management plan would result in a greater fire risk in the wildland urban interface.	<b>Fulfills:</b> Appropriate levels of recreation development (facility and trails), and an increase management presence would lead to a decrease in private property trespass, dumping, and vandalism. Appropriate fire management planning would reduce the potential fire risk in the wildland urban interface.		
<i>Meets the goals and objectives established through ongoing community partnerships and interagency planning efforts.</i>	<b>Partially fulfills:</b> Recommendations for the implementation of priority restoration and recreation projects would not occur at the same level when compared with Alternatives B, C and D.	<b>Fulfills:</b> Recommendations for priority restoration projects would be implemented as funding and staff time is available. Restoration projects would be consistent with ongoing efforts identified throughout the basin. Proposed recreation development (facility and trail) would be provided consist with interagency opportunities identified within the basin.		
<i>Provides an appropriate mechanism for evaluating proposed lands and realty projects including communication towers, utility line and rights-of-way applications</i>	<b>Partially fulfills:</b> Rights-of-Way (ROW), utility line, and communication tower proposals would be reviewed and approved on a case by case basis and would be subject to constraints to protect sensitive resource values, and address issues identified in the current Resource Management Plan. No additional management guidelines would be developed to address visual resources.	<b>Fulfills:</b> Discretionary Lands and realty proposals would be subject to design features that would mitigate potential impacts to visual resources within the planning area.		

<i>Decision Criteria/ Factor (Section 1.2.2)</i>	<i>Alternative A (No Action – Current Management)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>	<i>Alternative C</i>	<i>Selected Action (EA Alternative D)</i>
<i>Meets Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives</i>	<b>Fulfills:</b> Neither the Proposed Action nor the no Action Alternatives would prevent the attainment of any of the nine Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives (table 9). However, under The No Action Alternative, unauthorized recreational uses within riparian reserves would continue to degrade the conditions to which they contribute (e.g., soil erosion, sedimentation, bank erosion, compaction of riparian surface soils, conduit for the spread of noxious species, etc.). Under the Action Alternatives, restoration actions would be assisting in the restoration of riparian areas and riparian functional condition.			

## Decision Rationale

Considering public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management recommendations contained in the Sandy River Watershed Analysis, and the management direction contained in the Salem District RMP, I have decided to implement the **selected action** as described in table 1. (pgs. V-XII) of the decision record. The following is my rationale for this decision.

1. **Alternative A:** Does not provide a comprehensive strategy for restoring acquired lands and the establishment of recreation opportunities would not be provided. The implementation of this alternative would result in an increased potential for resource damage and unregulated public use throughout the basin. The potential impacts of unmanaged future recreation demand would not be addressed within the planning area. The lack of adequate recreational opportunities poses the greatest risk to increase private property trespass, dumping and vandalism.
2. **Alternatives B and C:** Action alternatives B and C have varying levels of proposed management actions for providing comprehensive restoration strategies while simultaneously providing recreation access. Each alternative partially fulfills the goal of ensuring a balanced approach to resource management, resulting in minimizing conflict between uses. Proposed facility/trail development contained in Alternative B is not expected to meet the future demands for recreation within the basin. Proposed facility/trail development contained in Alternative C would provide overnight facilities in sensitive locations creating an increased likelihood of private property trespass, dumping and vandalism, resulting in negative impacts to sensitive basin wide resources.
3. **Selected Action (Alternative D in the EA):** The selected action most accurately accomplishes the overall goal of creating a management plan that is reasonable, cost effective, viable and protects and enhances resources within the planning area. This is accomplished by providing a balanced approach to resource management through the establishment of a comprehensive restoration strategy, while providing complementary recreation access so as to not impact the resources on which these activities depend. This selected action creates an infrastructure to effectively work with adjacent landowners, county, state and other federal agencies to establish consistent planning guidance within the project area. Additionally, the selected action creates an adaptable strategy to provide sustainable recreation opportunities that will meet future demand within the basin. The selected action is the most responsive to user interests and concerns that were presented during the public outreach process.

## **Compliance with Direction**

This decision is in conformance with the *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan – Salem District* (2008 RMP). The analysis supporting this decision tiers to the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management*, October, 2008 (2008 Final EIS).

Other plans and planning efforts guiding this management plan are described in the *Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan Environmental Assessment* (2008 EA, # OR080-08-16).

## **Public Involvement/ Consultation/Coordination**

### ***Scoping***

The planning process for the SRBIMP began in June of 2006, with several public open houses soliciting input on river recreation and river access, trail recreation and trail access, and conservation issues and needs within the planning area. The BLM worked extensively with citizen-based meetings in the form of additional focus group and public open houses. The planning program also included numerous field trips, presentation media spots, and the development of a project website.

([http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/sandy\\_river\\_index.php](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/sandy_river_index.php)).

Issues and concerns received from the above scoping efforts are described in EA Section 1.5 and have been summarized and are included in Appendix A.

The Sandy River Basin Core Planning Team was developed as a precursor to the SRBIMP effort. The core planning team was assembled to develop a long range “vision” for the Sandy River Basin as a whole. This effort resulted in the Sandy River Basin Vision Document, completed in the fall of 2007 and available online.

([http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/files/SRB\\_Vision\\_2008.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/salem/plans/files/SRB_Vision_2008.pdf)).

The Vision Document describes the recreation resources within the planning area, identifies issues and concerns, and provides recommendations. Opportunities to provide additional trail and river related recreational experiences were identified as part of this effort. Members of the Core Planning Team include: Barlow Trail Association, Mount Hood National Forest, Sandy River Basin Partners, National Park Service, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon State Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management.

Core planning team work was followed by an interdisciplinary planning team analysis of alternatives for the future management of BLM lands within the Sandy River Basin. The result of this analysis is contained in the SRBIMP EA# OR-080-08-16. Alternatives were then presented to the public through the implementation of two open houses that were held in August of 2008 in Welches and Portland, Oregon.

### ***EA Comment Period and Comments***

A legal notice was placed in the Oregonian soliciting public input on the SRBIMP Environmental Assessment with a comment period from August 28 to September 26, 2008. One hundred (100) letters stating that the 2008 SRBIMP EA was available for comment and 25 EAs were mailed to agencies, individuals and organizations on August 29, 2008. I received 214 individual comments from letters and emails concerning this EA. Public comments were compiled, analyzed and helped provide additional direction to the selected action.

Comments were compiled into the following categories; Facility development, Trail Development, Restoration and Ecological Management, and General Management. Content found in Chapter 3 (Management objectives, standards and guidelines), and Chapter 4 (Management actions and implementation schedule), was created based, in part, on public input. Comments and public input were summarized and can be found in Appendix A.

### ***Endangered Species Act and Cultural (State Historic Preservation Office) Consultation***

Consultation for the implementation of proposed restoration and recreation projects will occur at the time that project specific NEPA analysis is completed.

## **Conclusion**

### ***Reviewing and Finding of No Significant Impact***

I have determined that change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI-August 2008) for the *Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan* is not necessary. The comments on the EA were reviewed and no information was provided in the comments that lead me to believe the analysis, data or conclusions are in error; or that the selected action needs to be altered. This decision is a management strategy for BLM administered lands in the Sandy River Basin. Site-specific NEPA analyses will be required for all proposed projects described in Chapter 4 of the management plan. Effects of the selected action are similar or less than the effects described in the EA. The following describes the changes between the proposed action and the selected action.

#### **Mt. Hood Corridor Lands (4,644 acres):**

Under the action alternative, many of the dense, even-aged, overstocked conifer stands throughout designated Mt. Hood Corridor lands would be considered for treatment. Projects were not included that focused on timber production, but stewardship or service contracts were proposed that could potentially remove timber or brush from Mt. Hood Corridor lands.

Treatments were identified to achieve the following goals:

- Reduction in stocking of dense stands to increase overall forest stand health
- Decrease the potential for wildfire spread.
- Restore and enhance wildlife habitat.
- Restore and enhance riparian areas and water quality.
- Maintain, restore and/or enhance the scenic qualities of the area

Based on public comments the selected action will exclude all proposed restoration projects related to vegetation management from occurring, including thinning and reducing stand density to promote forest health within designated Mt. Hood Corridor Lands.

All lands located in Townships 2 and 3 South, Ranges 6 and 7 East, which can be seen from the right-of-way of U.S. Highway 26, shall be managed for other resource values, planned and conducted for purposes other than timber harvest, so as not to impair the scenic qualities of the area. Timber cutting will only be conducted on these lands following a resource- damaging catastrophic event. Such cutting may only be conducted for activities following resource management objectives, in compliance with the current land use plans and to address the following:

- To maintain safe conditions for the visiting public.
- To control the continued spread of forest fire;
- For activities related to administration of the Mt. Hood Corridor lands; or
- For removal of hazard trees along trails and roadways.

### **Recreation:**

**Sandy/Salmon Confluence Site Planning:** The selected action will shift the North Side trailhead construction to the east towards Homestead Road to address wetland concerns (See conceptual site plan in Chapter 4). Any future development will require site-specific analysis and will avoid construction in sensitive locations.

**Trail Design:** The trail design plan contained in Alternative D will be chosen with the possibility of trail expansion in the future. Figure 7 illustrates future trail expansion zones. Future trail expansion would be evaluated if at minimum the following provisions are met:

- a. An Adopt-a-Trail agreement established by and approved between the BLM and willing participants.
- b. A sustainable trail design, operations, and maintenance plan needs to be developed to address long term operation and maintenance costs on planned trails.
- c. Site-specific NEPA documentation will be conducted for additional trails within planning area.

### **Land Use Allocations:**

#### ***Changes to Land Use Allocations under the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan – Salem District (2008 RMP)***

- a. The December 2008 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan for the Salem District established a new system of land use allocations for BLM-administered lands throughout the Salem District, including those within the Sandy River Basin. Major changes include:
  - Six new land use allocations (National Landscape Conservation System/Congressionally Designated; Administratively Withdrawn; Late-Successional Management Area; Riparian Management Area; Deferred Timber Management Area; Timber Management Area) with accompanying objectives

and management direction [see Chapter 1 of the Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan for an overview of land use allocations].

- Assignment of lands designated as District Designated Reserve into two separate land use allocations: National Landscape Conservation System and Administratively Withdrawn
- b. The Sandy River Gorge Outstanding Natural Area (ONA), Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) was expanded to incorporate additional BLM-administered lands within the Basin. As a result, the ACEC has been renamed the Sandy River Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) ACEC to better reflect the geographic extent of this ACEC.
- The 2008 RMP Record of Decision identifies that four parcels totaling approximately 400 acres were added to this ACEC between the release of Final Environmental Impact Statement and the approval of the Resource Management Plan. These parcels were acquired through an agreement with the Western Rivers Conservancy. The management direction for these parcels is described in the Sandy River Acquisition Environmental Assessment and Decision Record OR-080-02-01. The parcels are located as follows (T2S, R3E, Section 34; T2S, R5E, Section 12; T2S, R6E, Section 25).
  - As parcels are acquired, they are to be considered for inclusion into this ACEC.

#### **Off Highway Vehicle Management:**

##### ***Changes to Off Highway Vehicle Management under the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan – Salem District (2008 RMP)***

- a. *Areas Closed to Off-Highway Vehicle Use, Sandy River Planning Area, Salem District (10,189):*
- Mount Hood Corridor Lands and Bull Run Watershed Management Unit
  - Sandy River Outstanding Natural Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern
- b. *Areas Limited to designated Roads and Trails (3609 acres)*
- c. *Areas Limited to designated Roads (882 acres)*

For the reasons described above, the implementation of the *Sandy River Basin Integrated Management Plan* will not have significant environmental effects beyond those already identified in the 2008 Final EIS. The SRIMP does not constitute a major federal action having significant effects on the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

#### ***Administrative Review Opportunities***

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4 and Form 1842-1.

*If you appeal:* A public notice for this decision is scheduled to appear in the *Oregonian* newspaper on April 29, 2009.

Within 30 days of this notification, a *Notice of Appeal* must be filed in writing to the office which issued this decision – Cindy Enstrom, Cascades Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, OR, 97306. A copy of the *Notice of Appeal* must also be sent to the BLM Regional Solicitor (see Form 1842-1). The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) or 43 CFR 2804.1 for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your *Notice of Appeal*. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below.

Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Board and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

*Standards for Obtaining a Stay:* Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

*Statement of Reasons:* Within 30 days of the filing of the *Notice of Appeal*, a complete statement of reasons why you are appealing must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (see Form 1842-1 in Appendix B).

#### ***Implementation Date***

Implementation of this decision may begin 30 calendar days after the public notice of the Decision Record appears in the *Oregonian* newspaper. For additional information, contact Zach Jarrett (503) 375-5610, Cascades Resource Area Outdoor Recreation Planner, Salem BLM, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon 97306

Approved by: Cindy Enstrom  
Cindy Enstrom

4/20/2009  
Date