

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**The Von Road and Testament
Creek Road Project**

Road Repair and Decommissioning



March 2010

BLM/OR/WA/PT-10/035+1792

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering economic use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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The Von Road and Testament Creek Road Project

Environmental Assessment

March 30, 2010

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Office
Salem District, Tillamook Resource Area
Tillamook and Yamhill Counties, Oregon

Responsible Agency: USDI - Bureau of Land Management

Responsible Official: Steve Small
Field Manager
Tillamook Resource Area
4610 Third Street
Tillamook, OR 97141
(503) 815-1100

For Further Information, contact Bob McDonald
Tillamook Resource Area
4610 Third Street
Tillamook, OR 97141
(503) 815-1110

Abstract: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to conduct a project in the Nestucca River and North Yamhill River watersheds on private lands and on federal lands in the Adaptive Management Reserve and Riparian Reserve land use allocations. The project involves the repair and decommissioning of two roads that were damaged during storms in 2007 and 2008. Von Road, which is owned and controlled by BLM but is located on private land under a right-of-way agreement, was damaged by a landslide that destroyed a segment of the road and would be repaired by excavating into the hillside and widening what is left of the road for a distance of about 250 feet. Testament Creek Road was damaged by two or more landslides in an area with a lot of surface and subsurface water and landslide activity. This road would be decommissioned for a distance of about 0.8 miles by removing several culverts, including one on private land, and unstable sidecast material, waterbarring, and blocking the road to vehicles. The work on both roads is expected to be done in 2010 or 2011.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Project Location

The project area is approximately 20 miles southwest of the town of Tillamook, Oregon, in the Nestucca River and Yamhill River sixth-field watersheds. (Figure 1). The Testament Creek Road project area includes private and BLM managed lands within section 4 of Township 4 South, Range 7 West, and the Von Road project area is on private land in section 30 of Township 3 South, Range 5 West, Willamette Meridian.

The Testament Creek Road project area is located on a short segment of private land and on Oregon and California Railroad Lands (O & C Lands), within the Adaptive Management Reserve (AMR) and Riparian Reserve (RR) land-use allocations. The Von Road project area is located entirely on private lands under a right-of-way agreement, and the road is owned and controlled by BLM.

Conformance with Land Use Plans, Policies and Programs

Timber management on the Revested Oregon and California Railroad Lands (O&C Lands) managed by the Tillamook Resource Area is principally authorized and guided by:

The Oregon and California Act of 1937: Section 1 of the O&C Act stipulates that suitable commercial forest lands revested by the government from the Oregon and California Railroad are to be managed for the sustained production of timber.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA): Section 302 at 43 U.S.C. 1732(a), directs that “The Secretary shall manage the public lands . . . in accordance with the land use plans developed by him under section 202 of this Act when they are available . . .”

Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS): The PRMP/FEIS (USDI BLM 1994) provides goals, standards and guidelines for management of BLM lands in western Oregon.

Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP): The ROD/RMP (USDI BLM 1995), approved in accordance with the requirements of FLPMA, provides specific direction for resource management, including timber management, on the Salem District.

This EA will consider the environmental consequences of the proposed action and no action alternatives in order to provide sufficient evidence for determining whether the anticipated impacts would exceed those considered in the FEIS and require the preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). In addition to the FEIS, this analysis is tiered to assumptions and analysis of consequences provided by:

- The *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (USDA, USDI 1994a) (Northwest Forest Plan);
- The *FSEIS for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines in Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning*

Figure 1. Von Road and Testament Creek Road Project



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— Project Roads BLM Land

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 Bureau of Land Management
 Tillamook Resource Area
 4610 Third St.
 Tillamook, Oregon 97141

- *Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (USDA, USDI 2001a);

Implementation of the proposed action would also conform to the requirements of the *Coastal Zone Management Act* of 1974, as amended, and the *Endangered Species Act of 1972* (ESA), as amended.

Survey and Manage

The Von Road and Testament Road Project is consistent with the 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, as incorporated into the Salem District Resource Management Plan.

On December 17, 2009, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington issued an order in *Conservation Northwest, et al. v. Rey, et al.*, No. 08-1067 (W.D. Wash.) (Coughenour, J.), granting Plaintiffs' motion for partial summary judgment and finding a variety of NEPA violations in the BLM and USFS 2007 Record of Decision eliminating the Survey and Manage mitigation measure.

Judge Coughenour deferred issuing a remedy in his December 17, 2009 order until further proceedings, and did not enjoin the BLM from proceeding with projects.

This project may proceed even if the District Court sets aside or otherwise enjoins use of the 2007 Survey and Manage Record of Decision. This is because the Von Road and Testament Creek Road Project meets the provisions of the last valid Record of Decision, specifically the 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (not including subsequent Annual Species Reviews). Details of the project surveys are described below:

Surveys are not required on Testament Creek Road because the project area is within the road prism and is not considered habitat for any survey and manage species. Surveys are not required for Von Road because the road is located on private land and is not subject to the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure.

Decisions to be Made

The Tillamook Field Manager is the official responsible for deciding whether or not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and whether to approve the Von Road and Testament Creek Road project as proposed, not at all, or to some other extent.

Purpose of and Need for Action

Objectives

By comparing the existing conditions of the landscape in the project area to the management direction contained in the PRMP/FEIS and Salem ROD/RMP, the IDT identified a number of specific resource conditions that do not meet the long-term management objectives. The proposed action is designed to modify these conditions, and move towards achieving the management direction described in the PRMP/FEIS and ROD/RMP.

The objective of this project is to implement the following management objectives and direction from the ROD/RMP, pertaining to management of BLM roads.

- Develop and maintain a transportation system that serves the needs of users in an environmentally sound manner (p. 62);
- Closing and stabilizing, or obliterating and stabilizing roads based on the ongoing and potential effects to Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives and considering short-term and long-term transportation needs (p. 62);
- Minimize sediment delivery to streams from roads (p. 63)
- Reduce existing road mileage within key watersheds (p. 63);
- Reduce road density by closing minor collector and local roads in areas or watersheds where water quality degradation, big game harassment, or other road-related resource problems have been identified (p.63);

Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action

The No Action Alternative provides a baseline for the comparison of the alternatives. This alternative describes the existing condition and continuing trends.

Alternative 2: The Proposed Action

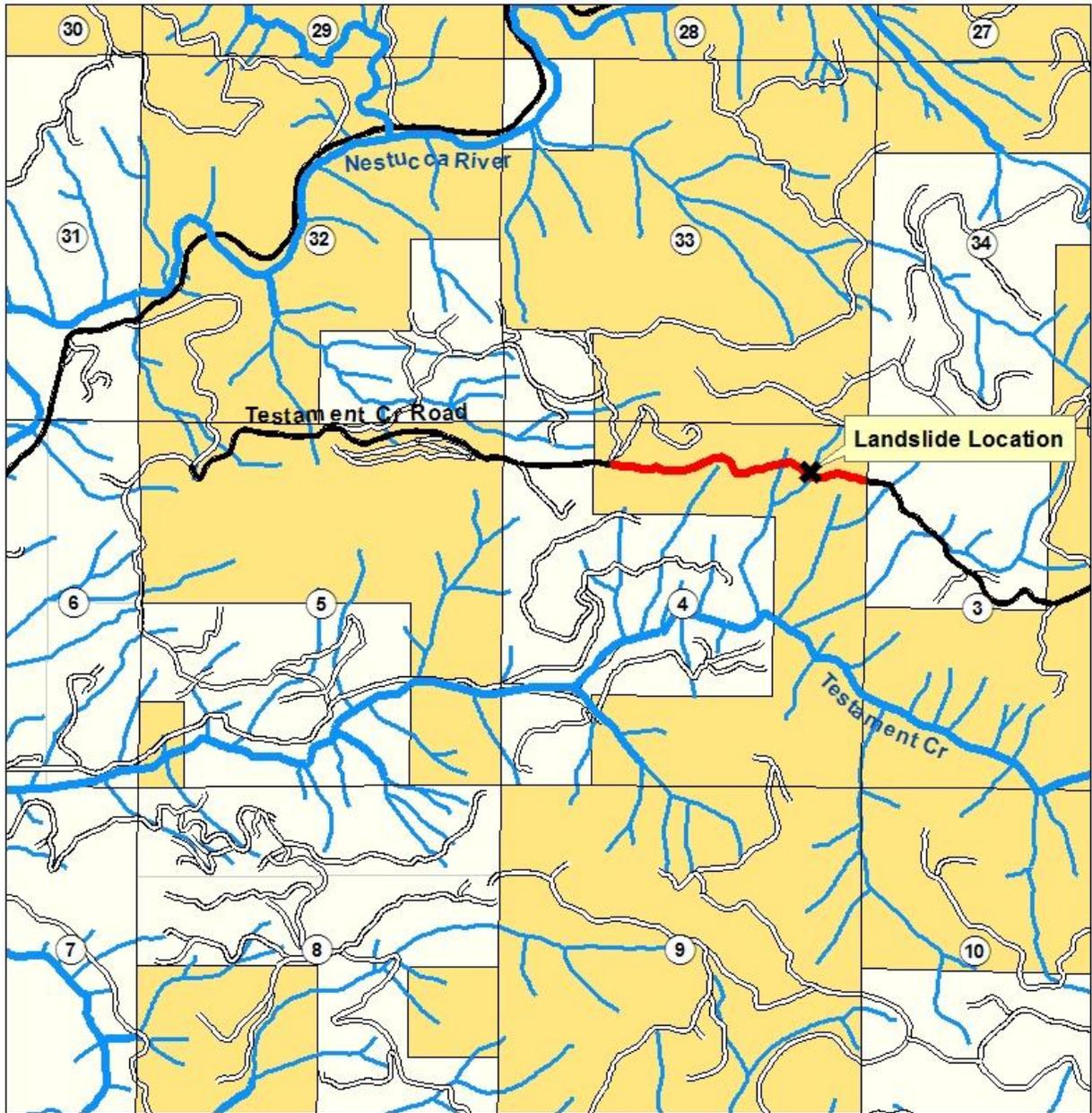
The proposed action is to repair and decommission two roads that were damaged during storms in 2007 and 2008. Testament Creek Road (Figure 2) was damaged by two or more landslides in an area with a lot of surface and subsurface water and landslide activity. This road would be decommissioned for a distance of about 0.8 miles by removing several culverts, including one on private land, and unstable sidecast material, waterbarring, and blocking the road to vehicles. The road segment in the project area is currently blocked to vehicle traffic by concrete barriers. Von Road (Figure 3), which is owned and controlled by BLM but is located on private land under a right-of-way agreement, was damaged by a landslide that destroyed a segment of the road and would be repaired by excavating into the hillside and widening what is left of the road for a distance of about 250 feet. The road segment in this project area is also currently blocked to vehicle traffic by concrete barriers. The work on each road is expected to take approximately one to two weeks, and both roads are expected to be completed in 2010 or 2011.

Connected Actions

There are no connected actions for this project.

Figure 2. Testament Creek Road Project Area

T4S R7W section 4



0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet

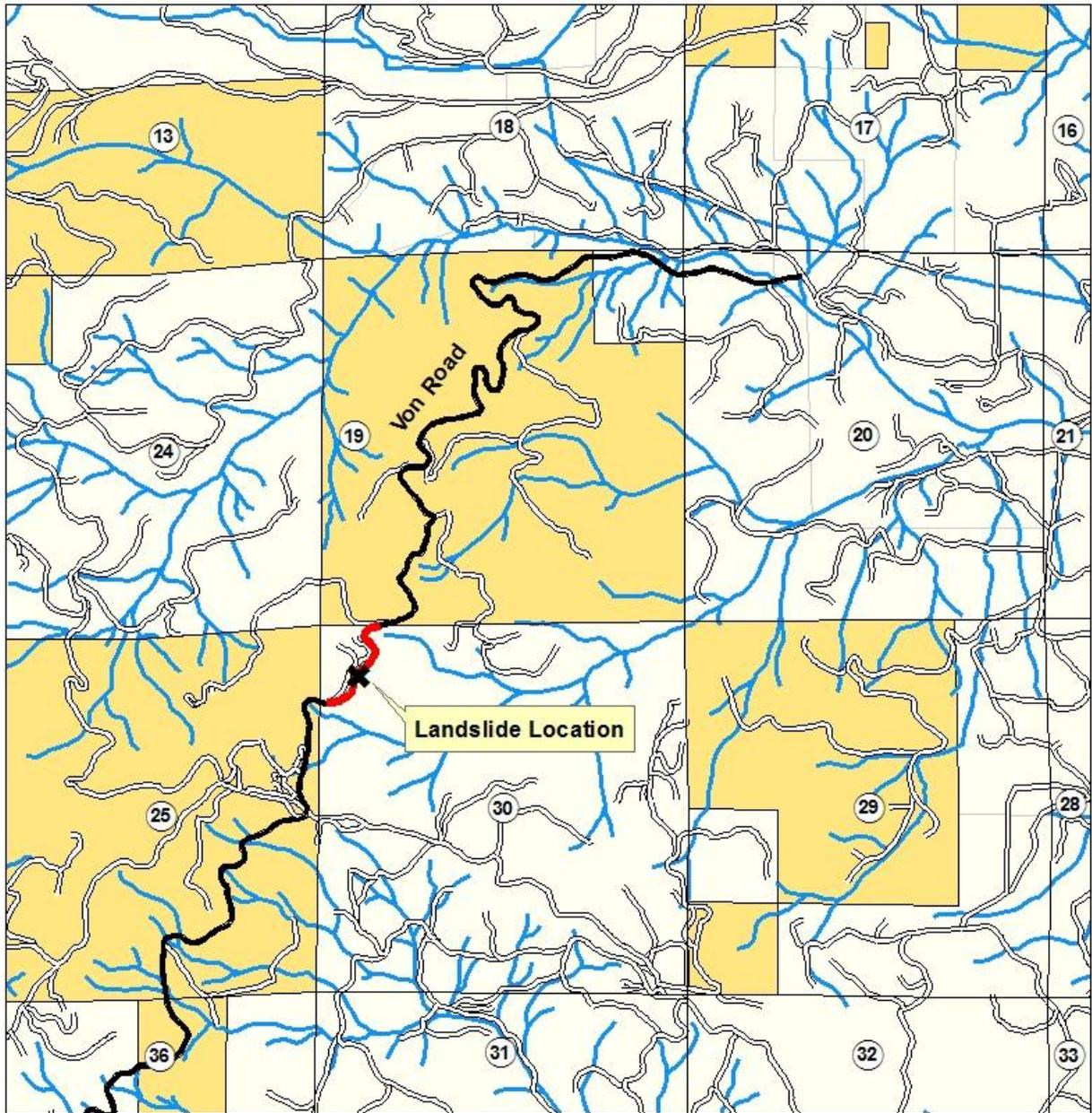
- Project Area
- BLM Lands
- Roads
- Streams



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Figure 3. Von Road Project Area

T3S R5W section 30



0 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 Feet

- Project Area
- BLM Lands
- Roads
- Streams



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Project Design Features

Construction and decommissioning activities would be limited to the dry season. All applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) for road construction and decommissioning would be used.

Instream work would be limited to the ODFW instream work window (July 1 to September 15) on the streams located on the Testament Creek Road Segment.

Full bench construction techniques would be used during excavation.

Waste would be hauled to appropriate destinations to prevent sediment delivery to streams.

Prior to the first winter season, seeding of exposed soils would occur.

Prior to entering the project area, or before returning to the watershed after leaving it, any heavy machinery (with the exception of pick-up trucks used for daily personnel travel) would have all dirt and adhering vegetation removed by power washing.

Removal of the fill at stream crossings would attempt to restore the stream channel and banks to original pre-road (natural) contours as much as possible.

Alternatives Considered and Not Further Analyzed

The IDT considered an alternative that would repair the Testament Creek Road rather than decommission that 0.8-mile section. This alternative was not analyzed in depth because it did not meet the objective of “Closing and stabilizing, or obliterating and stabilizing roads based on the ongoing and potential effects to Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives and considering short-term and long-term transportation needs” from the ROD/RMP. This section of road has been a maintenance problem for many years, with frequent and ongoing water-related problems including plugged and washed-out culverts, road bank failures, sidecast failures and road surface erosion. The IDT felt that only repairing the section damaged by landslides would not address the effects to ACS objectives from the rest of this road section.

Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

Descriptions of the affected environment and any environmental effects associated with the Von Road project are based on information gathered from sources such as aerial photos and visual observations from the existing Von Road surface and adjacent Federal lands. BLM did not have permission to access the land on which the existing road and the proposed road are located in order to do environmental surveys.

Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Species, Habitat and/or Critical Habitat

Affected Environment

Testament Creek Road

The proposed project would occur within the boundaries of Designated Critical Habitat for both the northern spotted owl and the marbled murrelet, the only Threatened or Endangered Species that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed project. Within the ¼-mile disturbance distance

of the project area (the distance from project activities where listed species may be distracted from normal activities) there is no marbled murrelet suitable habitat but there is approximately 128 acres of suitable spotted owl habitat. Other than the suitable owl habitat, there is no dispersal only type habitat present. The nearest known spotted owl sites are approximately five miles from the proposed action area, one to the north in the Tucca Creek drainage and one to the southwest in the Niagara Creek drainage. The nearest marbled murrelet site is in the Elk Creek drainage approximately four miles north.

Von Road

This proposed project area is along a BLM-controlled road on private industrial forest land which contains no suitable habitat for either the northern spotted owl or the marbled murrelet. Within the ¼-mile disturbance distance there is approximately 102 acres of owl dispersal habitat (74 ac. on BLM and 28 on private land). The Von road area is not within Designated Critical habitat for either the spotted owl or the marbled murrelet. The nearest spotted owl known site is about three and one-half miles north in the Haskins Creek drainage. The nearest murrelet known site is in the Elk Creek drainage about 12 miles west-northwest of the Von road area.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Testament Creek Road

As with the Proposed Action alternative, the No Action alternative would not impact spotted owl or marbled murrelet designated critical habitat or suitable habitat (see *Environmental Effects Alternative 2* below). The only difference between the two alternatives would be that there would be no potential for project related disturbance to unknown owls, if present, in the suitable habitat within the ¼-mile disturbance distance of the proposed project

Von Road

With no suitable habitat for either murrelets or spotted owls near the proposed Von Road repair area, there would be no effects to either species if the road is not repaired.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: The Proposed Action

Testament Creek Road

With no suitable habitat for the marbled murrelet anywhere near the proposed action, the project would not have any effect either to the murrelet as a species or to its designated critical habitat. Also, since the project would not remove trees or any other primary constituent element of suitable spotted owl habitat, there would not be any effect to owl designated critical habitat, or to the species through direct impact to birds or removal/degradation of suitable habitat. However, because there is about 128 acres of suitable owl habitat (albeit of low quality) within the ¼ mile disturbance distance there exists a small potential for disturbance to an owl or owls, if present. The nearby habitat has not been surveyed in the recent past and would not be for this project. The work would occur between July 1 and September 15 and should take one or two weeks at the most to complete, therefore any potential for disturbance would occur either at the very end of the critical breeding season (March 1-July 7) or more likely during the non-critical breeding season (July 8-September 30).

Because there is a small potential for disturbance to unknown owls, the Testament Creek portion of the proposed action *May Affect* but is *Not Likely to Adversely Affect* the spotted owl. Due to the potential for negative impact to the owl, Section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service would be required and would be carried out programmatically through the streamlined consultation process.

Von Road

The proposed action would impact very little forest vegetation, mainly brush and small trees on the cutbank above the repair area, and thus would not impact any kind of habitat for either the spotted owl or marbled murrelet. With no suitable habitat for either species within the ¼-mile disturbance distance, there would not be any potential for disturbance related impacts; therefore, the Von Road portion of the proposed action would not require any Section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wildlife Special Status Species (BLM 6840 policy) and Habitat

Affected Environment

Testament Creek Road

The proposed Testament Creek road project area is within the range of a number of species included on the State Director's Special Status Species list as required by the BLM's 6840 Special Status Species policy. Most of these species are terrestrial mollusks but also included is the red tree vole, an arboreal rodent, and the bald eagle. However, the project area involves roads and road related structures that are not habitat for any Special Status Species.

Von Road

Since the Von Road portion of the proposed action would actually involve impacts to privately owned lands, the BLM's Special Status Species policy would not apply in that location.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Not repairing or decommissioning the Testament Creek or Von Road areas could have a small potential to negatively affect SSS species if more landslides occur resulting from a lack of water control on the road surfaces. Landslides could cause debris torrents that could destroy terrestrial mollusks or their habitat, although any of those impacts would be localized and not cause any change in population viability. In the Testament Creek area, it is possible although not likely that a debris torrent could affect trees suitable for red tree vole habitation. Again, even the worst-case scenario would not result in any change in species viability or habitat quantity or quality. Bald eagles would not be affected by the No Action alternative.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The land area expected to be affected by the proposed action (road surface, ditchlines, cutbanks, side cast areas, etc) do not contain habitat for any special status species that could be impacted by these proposed activities. The only species that has the potential to be disturbed by noise generated by the proposed action would be the bald eagle and with no nests or potential aquatic foraging habitat nearby, there would not be any expected impacts.

Soil and Water Resources

Affected Environment

Testament Creek Road

The project area lies within the Nestucca River 5th-field watershed (HUC 1710020302), which is a designated Tier 1 Key Watershed. Key Watersheds are areas containing high quality habitat for at-risk aquatic species, and are believed to have high potential for restoration. Primary management objectives in Key Watersheds are reducing existing road mileage and watershed restoration.

The old, gravel surface road segment is on a mid-slope, south facing aspect. The elevation is 1,780 to 2,040 feet. The surface rock geology consists of diabase (a hard, intrusive rock), overlain by Trask River sandstone, and Siletz River basalt. The Natural Resource Conservation Service mapped the soils in the area as 48D—Hemcross-Klistan complex, 5 to 30 percent slopes and 43F—Klistan-Harslow-Hemcross complex, 60 to 90 percent slopes. These soils formed from colluvium (material rolling downhill.) They are moderately to very deep (20 to over 60 inches) to bedrock, and moderately textured (loams and clay loams).

The terrain above in the project area shows signs of high slope instability. The ground is steep and “benchy” occupied by six, small high gradient streams. The road segment crosses slopes of 40 to 80 percent. Many of the tree trunks on the slope are curved and lean in various directions. Deposits of rock and woody debris occur on some of the upslope sides of trees and the bottom of slopes. Tension cracks are present in several places. Field observations and aerial photo interpretations indicate that there have been several debris slides in the project area. Historically, this segment of road has been a maintenance problem for many years, with frequent and ongoing water-related problems including plugged and washed-out culverts, road bank failures, sidecast failures and road surface erosion.

Six, small, headwater tributaries (three perennial and three intermittent) drain the steep, forested area. Channel bankfull widths are less than two feet and low flows are less than 3 gallons per minute. Other than the road failure, the road segment does not appear to be directly contributing sediment to the local streams. Shading is near to full potential at the perennial stream crossings.

The most important and sensitive beneficial uses are fisheries (including salmonid migration, spawning and rearing) and cold aquatic life. The nearest fisheries is about ½-mile downstream in Testament Creek. There are no water rights for municipal or domestic use for over 10 miles downstream of the project.

The upper Nestucca, from Powder Creek to headwaters, was water quality (303(d)) listed for sediment in 1998 by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In 2003, DEQ established pollutant limit capacities (TMDLs) for temperature, sediment, and bacteria for all stream draining the Nestucca watershed.

A plugged culvert on private land apparently caused the road failure. Water from the plugged culvert flowed down approximately 900 feet of road into a fill slope on BLM land. Water saturated the road fill and sidecast and destabilized the road. The road failure mobilized debris into a small, perennial headwater stream and triggered two debris torrents. Large quantities of inorganic and organic material moved extremely rapidly down the mountain slope into the stream, scouring several hundred feet of the stream channel and depositing debris. The amount of debris transported downstream into Testament Creek and the Nestucca River is unknown and difficult to predict due to the nature of the site. Most of the barren ground caused by the road failure and debris slides is now covered by pioneer vegetation including red alders.

The primary contributing factors to the initial road failure and subsequent landslides are 1) location, 2) road design, and 3) maintenance.

- 1) The road segment is located on highly instable terrain crossing several steep gradient streams.
- 2) The road segment surface is poorly drained, and there are no functioning ditches. Most of the road is slightly outsloped, but not steep enough or smooth enough to allow sheet flow off the road surface. Nearly all of the stream culverts are old and undersized. Parts of the road segment have unstable sidecast material.
- 3) Road surface drainage conditions are poorly and rarely maintained. Most of the culverts are not functioning properly due to age, mechanical damage and/or sediment blockage. The road segment has not been graded for a long time. There are several areas in the project vicinity where surface water during the wet season flows hundreds of feet on the road surface.

Von Road

The project area lies in the Panther Creek drainage in the western side of the North Yamhill Watershed (HUC 1709000807). The watershed is not within a Key Watershed. The elevation is 1,500 to 1,600 feet. The local geology consists of weak marine sedimentary rock (Yamhill formation) overlain by intrusive rocks (diabase) and ancient landslide deposits (Holocene and Pleistocene). The Natural Resource Conservation Service mapped the soils in the area as HBE—Hembre silt loam, 5 to 30 percent slopes and OLF—Olyic silt loam, 60 to 90 percent slopes. These soils formed in colluvium. They are deep and well drained, with surface textures of silt loam and subsoils of silty clay loam or clay loam. Soils within the road right-of-way, especially within the road prism, are highly disturbed. The soils at the road failure are loamy and very deep (>6 feet) to highly weathered rock. They are non-cohesive and appear to have low shear strength, making them compact and more susceptible to slope instability.

There are no stream channels, ponds, or lakes near the road failure

The road segment is on a southeast facing shoulder of a low mountain. The road segment is gravel surface and in-sloped to a shallow ditch. The road failure is located above a steep scarp slope that drops a few hundred feet down to a gentle sloping bench. The failure appears to have been caused by water flowing down the road surface and saturating the fill material.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Testament Creek Road

Under the No Action Alternative, the road segment would continue to receive sporadic road maintenance. During high flow events, concentrated water would continue to flow down the road creating gullies and further destabilizing the unstable hillslope. The road failure would continue to grow in size, sending more sediment into the local stream and further destabilizing the hillslope. The likelihood of additional road failures and landslides potentially would increase in time as the road drainage system increasingly fails to function. The road failures/ landslides could be very large due to site conditions.

Von Road

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no action to stabilize this road segment at this time. Water would continue to flow down the road segment and road/hillslope failure, further eroding the road surface and hillslope below the road failure. The risk of additional road failures would increase over time but would remain relatively low due to site conditions. No effects would be expected to water resources because there is no surface water nearby.

Cumulative Effects

Because the no action alternative would not alter current soil condition or trends, when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, there would be no incremental cumulative effect to soil resources.

Since no direct or indirect effects on hydrology and water quality are expected from the No Action Alternative, no cumulative effects to streamflow or water quality are anticipated.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: The Proposed Action

Testament Creek Road

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, there would be very little soil disturbance expected outside the existing road prism. Most of that soil disturbance would come from removing unstable sidecast material and removing culverts at stream crossings.

Water effects from the action would be limited to the local area (i.e., not extend more than 300 or 400 feet downstream or upstream from the disturbance). It is unlikely the action would result in any alterations to channels or floodplains downstream or elsewhere in the watershed. There would be no measureable effect on water temperature because the stream channel widths are very narrow, the gradients are steep, and the total length of the streams that would be exposed from the culvert removal would be less than 50 feet. The stream would continue to be well shaded by trees, other streamside vegetation, and banks.

The road decommissioning, especially in-channel work associated with culvert removal, would result in small, short-term, increases in turbidity and sediment. Increases are expected to be small for the following reasons. The project design features and best management practices would minimize the potential for erosion and sediment delivery. Stream crossings are small (culverts are 24 inches or less in diameter), flows would be minimal during removal, little soil disturbance is expected because the crossings are covered by shallow fill. Stream channels and banks would be expected to be stabilized within two years following disturbance. The local streams are very small, have a limited ability to carry sediment, and are located at least one half mile upstream of Testament Creek. Any turbidity and sediment yield increases resulting from the road decommissioning would be difficult to measure at Testament Creek. The action is unlikely to contribute more than a tiny fraction to the supply or transport of fine sediment in this watershed.

The Proposed Action Alternative would reduce the road mileage within a Tier 1 Key Watershed by closing and stabilizing approximately 0.8 miles of road. Road decommissioning would reduce the potential of future landslides and subsequent sediment delivery to streams and scouring channels from the existing road segment. Removing the culverts would provide for improved stream flow and passage of sediment, organic materials and aquatic organisms thereby restoring natural drainage patterns. Over the long term (>3 years), the road decommissioning would help reduce the risks of water quality impacts that this road segment currently poses. Current conditions and trends in turbidity and sediment yield would likely be reduced.

Cumulative Effects

The Proposed Action Alternative would reduce risk of a catastrophic fill and culvert failure which could potentially lead to cumulative effects to sedimentation and turbidity downstream.

Von Road

Under the Proposed Action, the road surface drainage would be improved and a stable road surface would be constructed through full bench construction techniques. A small amount of soil disturbance (less than ½ acre) would occur within the road right-of-way, mainly on the hillside above the existing road during excavation. A small portion of that area would be permanently removed from commercial timberland and placed into the road system. No effects to hydrology and water quality are expected because of the limited soil disturbance and the lack of streams in the vicinity.

Cumulative Effects

Project effects to soils would be small and limited to the road right-of-away, and would be undetectable on the local and watershed scale. Since no direct or indirect effects on hydrology and water quality are expected from this action, no cumulative effects to streamflows are anticipated.

Fisheries

Affected Environment

Testament Creek Road

The project location is approximately 0.5 miles above known Oregon Coast coho salmon (OC coho) spawning and rearing habitat in Testament Creek. Data on coho distribution was collected between 2002 and 2004 in the Nestucca Watershed.

The plugging of the culvert at the East end of this road segment and diversion of water down this road segment was evident in the field visit to this site conducted on August 26, 2009. On the date of the site visit, several road fill failures attributed to water running down the road during winter storms were observed. If water is channeled down the road again there is potential of additional fill failures at the current failure sites.

Von Road

This section of road is located on private industrial timberland in the Yamhill Watershed approximately 2 miles above ESA listed Upper Willamette Steelhead in Panther Creek. Upper Willamette chinook are located 11 miles downstream near the town of McMinnville. There are no stream channels located in the project area.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Testament Creek

Under the No Action alternative, there would be no actions to stabilize this segment of road at this time. Fish habitat characteristics and fish distribution would be dependent upon the processes that are now in place. Continued road failure is anticipated that has the potential of sediment reaching and affecting fish habitat in Testament Creek downstream. The scope of potential impacts from future fill movement is difficult to estimate as major portions of this road have already moved down the hill. Additional failures have the potential to affect water quality, fish habitat and ESA-listed fish, depending on the size and location of future road failures.

Von Road

Under the No Action alternative, there would be no actions to stabilize this segment of road at this time. Due to the nature of this road failure and the lack of streams in the project area, the no action alternative leaving this road closed would have no effects to fisheries resources.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: The Proposed Action

Testament Creek

The environmental effects of this action are anticipated to be very localized and limited to water quality within a few hundred feet of the project site. As all construction will be conducted during low flow conditions (ODFW instream work window July 1 to September 15) and the streams are very small, there are no anticipated effects to water quality where fish are present. There are no anticipated changes to stream substrate, large woody debris, or channel geometry (except at the sites where the culverts are removed). In addition, there are no needs for fish passage; these streams are above fish distribution (BLM data). The streams coming off this road segment are small and steep, dropping 800 feet in the half mile to Testament Creek. Flows in the summer are only a few gallons per minute.

Oregon Coast coho are listed under both the ESA and MSA. Due to the small scale of this project, the distance to OC coho and the lack of changes to physical properties in Testament Creek, there will be no effects to OC coho or their designated critical habitat under the ESA. Both OC coho and Chinook are listed under the MSA. As described above, no changes to habitat where these fish are located will occur, therefore there would be no effect to MSA habitat.

Von Road

The environmental effects of this action are anticipated to be very localized with no anticipated changes to water quality as a result of actions at the project site. Due to the lack of streams in the project area and the distance to ESA-listed fish, there are no effects anticipated on Upper Willamette Steelhead or Upper Willamette chinook or their habitats. Coho and chinook populations in this watershed are listed under the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). No effects to MSA habitat will result from this project due to the lack of stream connections.

Invasive, Nonnative Species (Executive Order 13112)

Affected Environment

Testament Creek and Von Roads

Areas of activity during this project will be contained within or near the road prism where site disturbance previously occurred during the initial road construction project. Existing vegetation consists of grasses, forbs, hardwoods, and an occasional conifer sapling. Any ground-disturbing activity offers opportunity for the introduction of noxious weeds and/or invasive non-native plant species based on the existence of a seed source. *Cirsium vulgare*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Rubus discolor*, *Rubus laciniatus*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Phalaris arundinacea*, and *Cytisus scoparius* are invasive non-native plant species commonly found within the general vicinity of the project areas.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Testament Creek and Von Roads

No appreciable increase in noxious weeds and/or invasive non-native plant species is expected to occur with the no action alternative. Any increase that does occur should be mostly confined to landslides disturbance resulting from a lack of water control on the road surfaces. Without mitigation measures (i.e., introducing native plant species) any disturbance would be subject to invasion and longer term persistence by these undesired invasive non-native plant species therefore increasing the seed bank potential for other disturbance sites in the local vicinity.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Testament Creek and Von Roads

All invasive non-native plants within the vicinity of the project area are “B” designated (established infestations) on the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s noxious weed list. These weed species are commonly found throughout Western Oregon tending to occupy areas of high exposure to light. Some degree of invasive non-native species introduction or spread is probable as management activities occur in the project areas. Soil disturbing activities would be the most likely places for weed establishment. Project design features require power-washing equipment and seeding exposed soils therefore reducing the likelihood of invasion of non-native species throughout the project areas.

Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Plant Species and Habitat

Affected Environment

Testament Creek and Von Roads

The proposed Testament Creek and Von Road road project areas are within the range of a number of species included on the State Director’s Special Status Species list as required by the BLM’s 6840 Special Status Species policy. Most of these species require Large down wood that are decay class 3 and 4 or mature timber stands with plant associations greater than of 60 years in age. These project areas involve roads and road related structures that are not suitable habitat for Special Status Plant Species. In addition, the Von Road portion of the proposed action would actually involve impacts to privately owned lands, the BLM’s Special Status Species policy would not apply in that location.

Environmental Effects Alternative 1: No Action

Testament Creek and Von Roads

Not repairing or decommissioning the Testament or Von Road areas would have no potential to negatively affect SSS plant species if more landslides occur resulting from a lack of water control on the road surfaces.

Environmental Effects Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Testament Creek and Von Roads

The land area expected to be affected by the proposed action (road surface, ditchlines, cutbanks, side cast areas, etc) do not contain required habitat for any special status plant species that could be impacted by these proposed activities.

Survey and Manage Plant and Wildlife Species Status

Von Road is located on private land and is therefore not subject to the Survey and Manage mitigation measure. The proposed work on Testament Creek Road would all occur with the road prism, which is not considered habitat for Survey and Manage species, and therefore does not require surveys.

LIST OF PREPARERS

The following individuals participated on the interdisciplinary team or were consulted in the preparation of this EA:

Interdisciplinary Team Lead, GIS	Bob McDonald
Wildlife Biology	Andy Pampush
Soils and Water	Dennis Worrel
Fish Biology	Matt Walker
Botany and Invasive Species	Kurt Heckerroth
Engineering	Joel Churchill
Recreation	Debra Drake

APPENDIX 1 - Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives

Testament Creek Road

<i>Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objective</i>	<i>Remarks (No Action Alternative addresses all projects)</i>
<p>1. Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 1</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternative: The No Action alternative would maintain the development of the existing vegetation and associated stand structure at its present rate. The current distribution, diversity and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features would be maintained.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: The project would restore natural drainage patterns (both surface and subsurface) and natural travel paths for aquatic organisms by removing barriers (i.e. culverts) for water, sediment and large woody debris. This would thereby help restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape-scale features.</p>
<p>2. Maintain and restore spatial and temporal connectivity within and between watersheds.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 2</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternative: The No Action alternative would maintain the current spatial and temporal connectivity. The current breaks in the natural flow patterns and the disconnections between the riparian areas with the stream crossing will continue.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: The project would restore spatial and temporal connectivity. Riparian areas associated with stream crossings will become continuous, and surface and subsurface flows will follow natural patterns.</p>
<p>3. Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom configurations.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 3</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: The current condition of physical integrity would be maintained. There would continue to be a high risk of road failure (e.g., culvert plugging) that could lead to</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: Physical integrity of channels at crossings with culvert work would be altered for one to several years following removal until the natural streambank and bottom configurations at stream crossings are restored.</p>
<p>4. Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 4</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: With the exception of sediment, the current condition of the water quality would be maintained. The road failure would continue to grow in size, sending more sediment into the local stream and further destabilizing the hillslope. The likelihood of additional road failures and landslides potentially increasing sediment delivery to streams would increase in time.</p>

<i>Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objective</i>	<i>Remarks (No Action Alternative addresses all projects)</i>
	<p>Proposed Action Alternative: The action alternative is not likely to have any measurable effect on stream temperatures, pH, or dissolved oxygen. The project would minimize sediment delivery to streams and reduce the risk of addition failures, including catastrophic ones. There would be short-term, localized increases in sedimentation and turbidity when the project is implemented (during culvert removal). Over the long-term (>3 years), current conditions and trends in turbidity and sediment yield would likely be reduced.</p>
<p>5. Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which aquatic ecosystems evolved.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or Prevent the attainment of ACS objective 5</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: The road failure would continue to grow in size, sending more sediment into the local stream and further destabilizing the hillslope. The likelihood of additional road failures and landslides potentially increasing sediment delivery to streams would increase in time.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: The project would minimize sediment delivery to streams and reduce the risk of addition failures, including catastrophic ones. The action is unlikely to have any measurable effect on stream temperatures. There may be short-term, localized increases in sedimentation and turbidity when the project is implemented (during culvert removal). However, project design criteria were developed to minimize these impacts and keep them to an acceptable level.</p>
<p>6. Maintain and restore in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats and to retain patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing.</p> <p><i>Both the Action and No Action None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 6</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: The current in-stream flows sufficient to create and sustain riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats would be maintained.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: The proposed action would maintain current in-stream flows. Removal of stream crossings would help restore the natural patterns of sediment, nutrient, and wood routing.</p>
<p>7. Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 7</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: There are no floodplains within the project area. The current water table elevations will be maintained</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: Road decommissioning will re-establish natural drainage patterns and maintain water table elevations.</p>

<i>Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objective</i>	<i>Remarks (No Action Alternative addresses all projects)</i>
<p>8. Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 8</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: The current species composition and structural diversity of plant communities will continue along the current trajectory.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: Disturbed areas will be planted, seeded with native plants or non-persistent non-natives. These plants will rapidly provide ground cover, thereby reducing erosion. In a few years, native plants will replace the non-natives thereby maintaining and restoring the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas.</p>
<p>9. Maintain and restore habitat to support well distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate and vertebrate riparian-dependent species.</p> <p><i>None of the Alternatives retard or prevent the attainment of ACS objective 9</i></p>	<p>No Action Alternatives: Habitats will be maintained over the short-term and continue to develop over the long-term with no known impacts on species currently present.</p> <p>Proposed Action Alternative: Road decommissioning would restore vegetation, streamflow, and erosion patterns, enhancing terrestrial and aquatic plant and animal populations.</p>