

## **Categorical Exclusion Documentation for All Projects Other Than Hazardous Fuels and Fire Rehabilitation Projects**

### **A. Background**

**BLM Office:** Salem District – Horning Seed Orchard    **Lease/Serial/Case File No:** N/A

**Categorical Exclusion Number:** DOI-BLM-OR-S000-2009-0002-CX    **Date:** 08/31/2009

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Horning Orchard Clearing and Replanting

**Location of Proposed Action:** Horning Seed Orchard in T4S. R3E. sections 13 and 23, Clackamas County

**Land Use Allocation(s)** Administratively Withdrawn, Non-Forest Agriculture (NA)

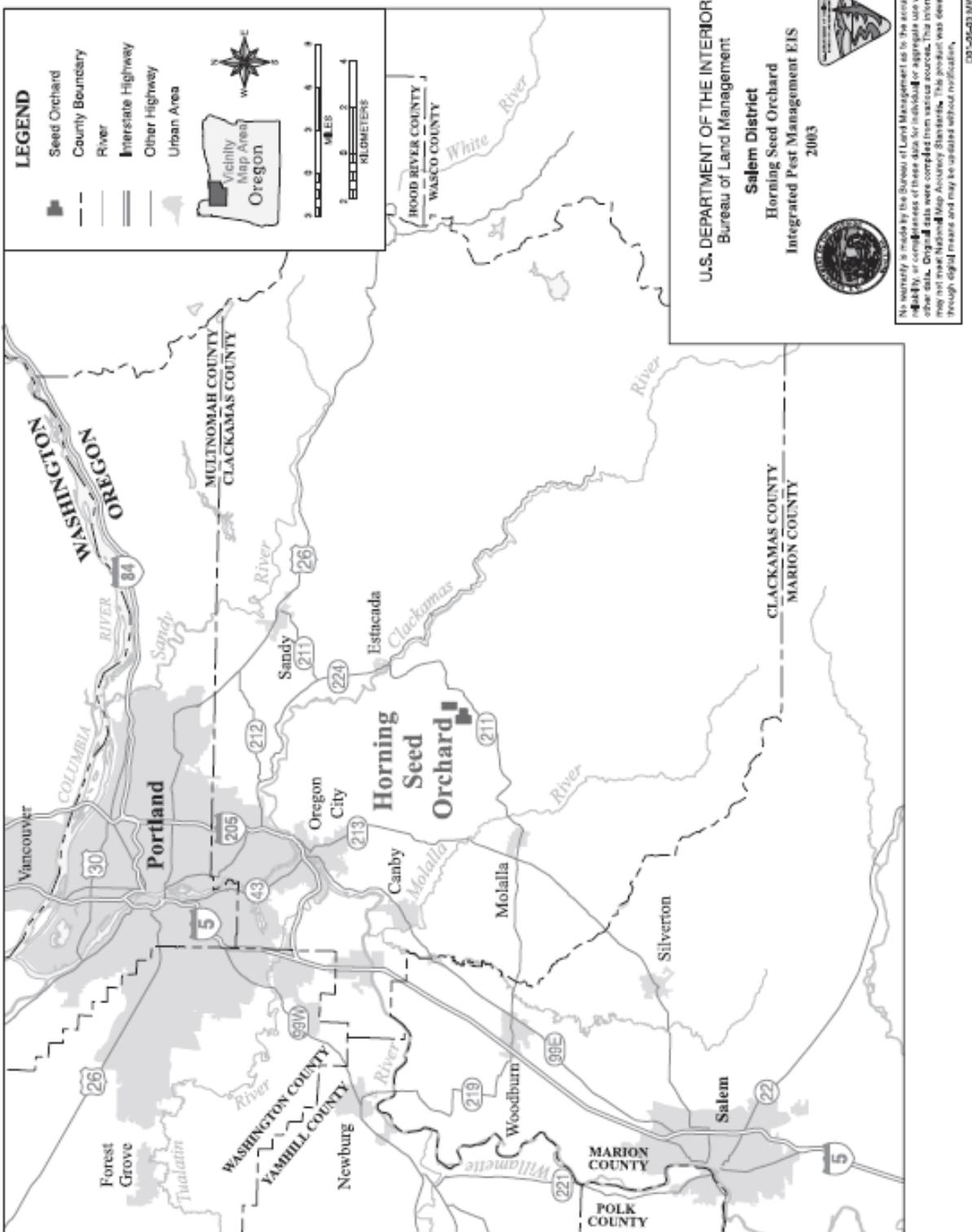
**Description of Proposed Action:** Horning Seed Orchard, located in Colton, Oregon, is one of four centralized seed orchards that are managed by the BLM in western Oregon. The orchard, established in 1964, provides genetically improved seed for Salem and Coos Bay BLM districts and for eight orchard cooperators. There are approximately 222 acres devoted to conifer seed production. Most orchard ground is managed for production of Douglas-fir seed, but minor species orchards for western redcedar, western hemlock, noble fir, sugar pine, and western white pine are also present.

New orchard units are planned for development over the next ten years in sections 13 and 23 as part of the 2009 Orchard Consolidation Plan. The BLM will prepare orchard units for planting by removing biomass, soil cultivation, and land leveling (See table 1). Biomass includes orchard grass, brush, stumps, and conifer trees that are up to 40 years old. The 40 year old conifer trees, used to produce seed cones, are open grown and too rough and fast growing to be sold as lumber.

- Conifers may be removed by chainsaw falling and yarding, mechanized falling/yarding, or pushing trees over with an excavator or dozer. Biomass will be removed from the orchard, either in the form of logs (firewood), chips, or other wood fiber. Smaller material will be piled and burned on site in compliance with smoke management guidelines.
- Land clearing operations will remove brush and vegetation, as well as stumps. The ground will then be deep ripped to 18” using winged rippers, followed by disking, land leveling, and establishment of a cover crop.
- Rototilling will be used on acres that have been previously cleared but never planted to trees. Each orchard row in these fallow, grass covered areas will be tilled to a width of 6ft-8ft., leaving approximately 12 ft. of untouched cover crop between rows.
- Stump grinding will be utilized to remove operational/safety hazards created by stumps in areas where the ground will not be required for orchard development in the near future.

The BLM will then plant these orchard units with grass and new seedlings. A native grass mix will be planted following land clearing operations for soil stabilization. The seed will be drilled rather than spread to limit vegetative competition to tree seedlings.

**Figure 1.2-1: Location of Horning Seed Orchard**



This project will affect approximately 93 acres (Table 1). The BLM will prepare approximately 77 acres, which includes 56 acres of Douglas-fir, 11 acres of sugar pine, and 10 acres of noble fir, for planting. An additional 16 acres account for required turn lanes, holding areas, and staging areas. Seedlings will be shovel/hoe/auger/tree spade planted on 20ft. x 20ft. spacing, resulting in new orchards having 109 trees per acre. Seedlings will be mulched with matting material to help control competing vegetation and retain soil moisture. Shade cards and animal control tubing will be utilized as needed.

Table 1: Proposed Work

Section	Orchard Block	Acres	% Slope (Average)	Present condition of site	Proposed Treatment	
13	Butte Falls (Mid)	4.4	5%	Brush Field with old stumps and occasional standing trees	Tree removal; stump/vegetation removal; contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal; site preparation	
	Butte Falls (High)	4.4	5%			
	Cascade Noble Fir	4.8	5%			
	Cascade Noble Fir	2.0	5%	Noble fir orchard unit		
	B11	3.0	5%	Cleared field with no stumps	Rototill	
23	C07	15.0	5%	Douglas-fir orchard unit	Tree removal; stump/vegetation removal; contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal; site preparation	
	C04	14.0	5%			
	I10	1.2	10%			
	P4	4.5	5%			
	P7	2.5	5%			
	P18	1.2	5%			
	P19	1.2	5%			
	P20	3.9	5%			
	P21	3.0	15%			
	P82	2.4	15%			
	B40	2.8	10%	Cleared field with stumps	Stump/ vegetation removal; contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal; site preparation	
	B41	2.4	10%			
	B20		0.3	10%	Cleared field with no stumps	Contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal; site preparation
			3.0	5%		
	I10 - PH2	2.7	5%	Cleared field with no stumps	Rototill	
I11 - PH2	7.3	10%				
I12 - PH2	3.4	10%				
I13 - PH2	3.4	5%				
Total Acres (Horning)		92.8				

## **Project Design Features:**

### General

- All material hauled and/or piled must be free of dirt or soil, so it can be readily used for biomass or burned. The loader for loading and/or piling debris will be equipped with an open bucket or grapple system so that only debris free of dirt will be removed. All debris pile locations will be approved by the COR prior to operating on the contract area. No debris piling will be allowed within 200ft of streams.
- Minimum distance between debris piles will be 300 feet. Windrows are only acceptable along the perimeters of the Butte Falls (Mid), Butte Falls (High), and Cascade Noble Fir units. Spillage of debris outside the treatment area will not be allowed. Vegetative material within approximately 150 feet of the disposal sites may be pushed with bulldozers equipped with brush blades; all other material will be hauled with dump trucks or dump trailers. The Contractor may be required to re-pile the dumped material with a bulldozer or the loader to decrease the area needed for debris disposal, and improve conditions for burning.
- The BLM will conduct all burning operations in compliance with the Oregon Smoke Management Plan to maintain air quality and visibility in a manner consistent with the Clean Air Act.

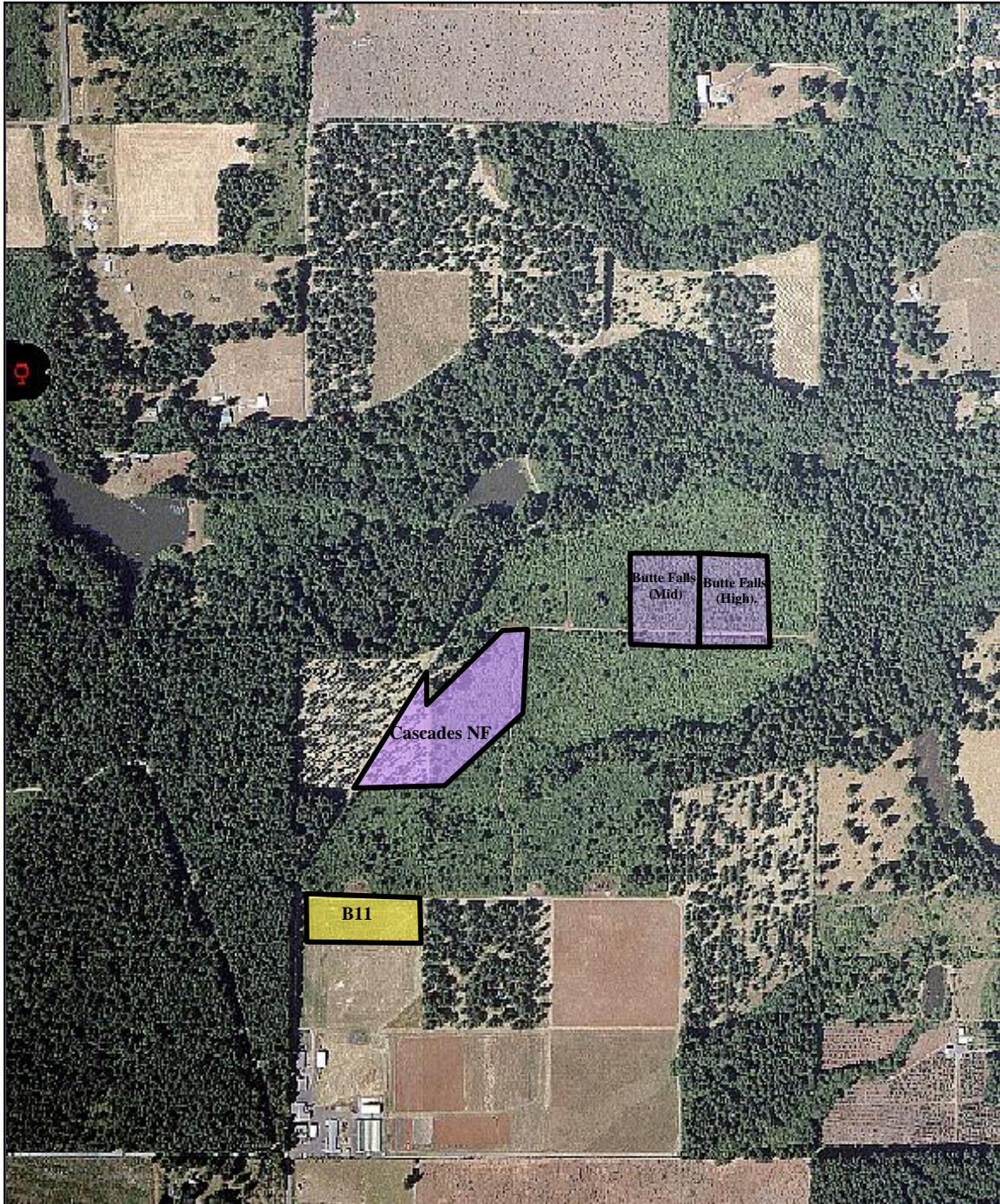
### Tree Removal

- Contractor will remove all trees from the existing Douglas-fir and Noble-fir orchard units (see Table 1) and move to a designated landing, adjacent to area being cleared. Trees may be whole-tree skidded to the landing area prior to delimiting to reduce the amount of debris in the harvest unit which would later need to be removed.
- Tree falling will take place between early December and mid-June. No skidding will take place during wet soil conditions as determined by the authorized officer.

### Stump/vegetation removal, Contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal, and Site preparation

- All work associated with stump/vegetation removal, contouring /ripping/ surface debris removal, and site preparation will be performed during dry months (early-summer to mid fall) to minimize chances for soil compaction and erosion.
- The contractor will remove all stumps and vegetation (grass, weeds, brush, and shrubs) within the treatment area to a depth of 18 inches and in such a manner that the mineral soil is exposed. Soil disturbance should be minimized. No blasting with explosives is permitted.
- Stump holes will be filled and the land restored to its original contours with minimal disturbance to topsoil. This includes obliterating skid roads and any landing excavations.
- If self-drafting winged rippers are employed, only one pass on the contour will be required. If fixed hydraulic winged rippers are utilized, two passes will be required. The second pass will be on the contour and will be at a right angle to the first pass.
- Upon inspection following land leveling, the ground will receive a final smoothing using a spring toothed harrow or cultipacker to prepare for seeding. These implements will be pulled on the contour.

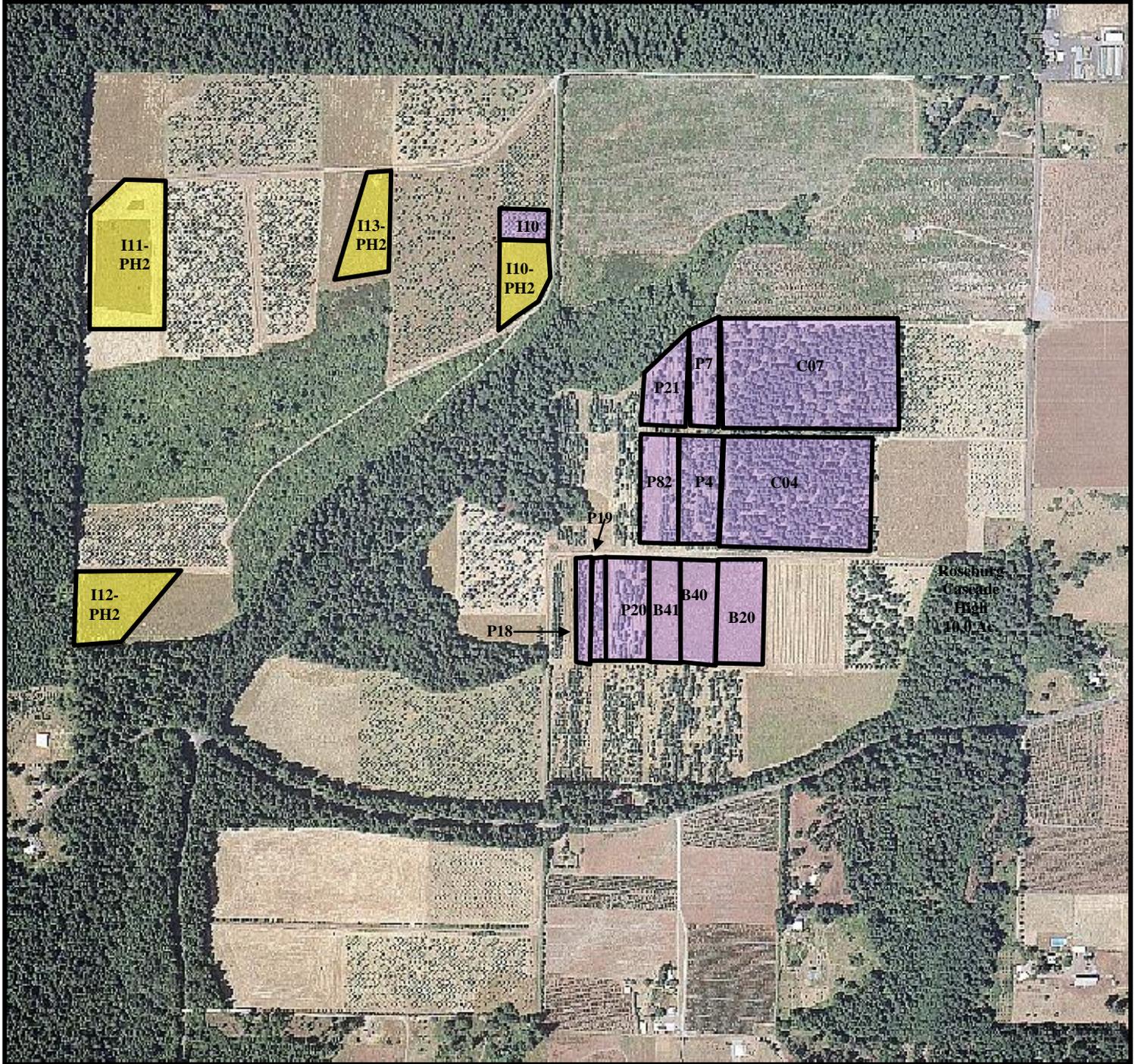
# Horning Seed Orchard Orchard Clearing Section 13



 = Orchard/Land Clearing

 = Rototilling

# Horning Seed Orchard Orchard Clearing Section 23



 = Orchard/Land Clearing

 = Rototilling

**B. Land Use Plan Conformance:**

On July 16, 2009 the U.S. Department of the Interior, withdrew the Records of Decision (2008 ROD) for the Western Oregon Plan Revision and directed the BLM to implement actions in conformance with the resource management plans for western Oregon that were in place prior to December 30, 2008. Although project planning and preparation of National Environmental Policy Act documentation for this project began after the effective date of the 2008 ROD, this project was designed to comply with the land use allocations, management direction, and objectives of the 1995 resource management plan (1995 RMP).

**Land Use Plan Name:** Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995 RMP) **Date Approved** March 1995, as amended

The proposed action is in conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): 1995 RMP p. 58, Appendix E-1,E-2 - Seed orchards are managed for seed production, including stimulation techniques to encourage cone production and removal of trees representing progeny that demonstrate slow growth in field tests or show undesirable characteristics.

**C. Compliance with NEPA:**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11. **C (1)**, which allows for land cultivation and silvicultural activities (excluding herbicide application) in forest tree nurseries, seed orchards, and progeny test sites.

***Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review***

Table 1: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
<b>2.1/</b> Have significant impacts on public health or safety? Rationale: All proposed activities follow establish Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety. The proposed orchard clearing/orchard establishment will have no effect on public health or safety.		No
<b>2.2/</b> Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as: historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, national natural landmarks, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, national monuments, migratory birds, other ecologically significant or critical areas? Rationale: The area proposed for orchard clearing/orchard establishment is outside of any unique areas such as those discussed above		No
<b>2.3/</b> Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2) (E)]? Rationale: The effects of orchard clearing/orchard establishment are not controversial. This will be the second land clearing treatment for between 7 and 20 of the proposed acres, with the first being approximately 20 years ago. No excavation will be done during excessively wet periods to minimize the chance for runoff. There are no unresolved		No

Table 1: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		
<b>2.4/</b> Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		No
Rationale: The proposed orchard clearing/orchard establishment is not unique or unusual. The BLM has considerable experience implementing similar actions at the seed orchard without highly controversial, highly uncertain, or unique or unknown risks		
<b>2.5/</b> Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?		No
Rationale: The BLM has conducted similar actions at the seed orchard since its inception. There is no evidence that clearing and establishing orchards has potentially significant environmental effects and it will not establish a precedent or decision for future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. See 2.4.		
<b>2.6/</b> Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?		No
Rationale: The proposed action will not have a direct relationship to other actions with any kind of environmental effect; therefore there are no significant cumulative effects as a result of these actions.		
<b>2.7/</b> Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office?		No
Rationale: No properties listed or eligible for listing are affected.		
<b>2.8/</b> Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		No
Rationale: No habitat for ESA listed species is present; therefore the proposed action will have no adverse effect on Endangered or Threatened Species. No designated Critical habitat is present within the proposed project area.		
<b>2.9/</b> Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		No
Rationale: Proposed orchard clearing/orchard establishment follow all known Federal, State, local, and Tribal laws imposed for the protection of the environment		
<b>2.10/</b> Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		No
Rationale: There will be no adverse effect on low income or minority populations associated with orchard clearing/orchard establishment.		
<b>2.11/</b> Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?		No
Rationale: There are no known Indian sacred sites located within the seed orchard. The proposed action will not limit the use of or the physical integrity of Indian sacred site on Federal land.		
<b>2.12/</b> Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?		No
Rationale: The Contractor will be required to clean all equipment using a pressure washer prior to entry on BLM lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and root disease.		

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 (see Table 1, above) apply.

**I considered** and reviewed the effects of the following additional elements of the environment required by management direction. Table 2 shows the effects of the proposed action on these elements of the environment.

Elements of the Environment	Status: Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected	Remarks
Energy (Executive Order 13212)	Not Affected	There is no known energy resources located in the project area. The proposed action will have no adverse effect on energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.
Essential Fish Habitat (Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Cons. /Mgt. Act)	Not Present	This action will have no effect on MSA species or EFH.
Hazardous or Solid Wastes	Not present	No hazardous or solid wastes are on the lands proposed for clearing and planting. No hazardous or solid wastes will be produced by the proposed action.
Special Status (except T/E) or other rare or uncommon species/habitat	Not Present	There are no known Special Status Species sites, and no habitat modification will occur.

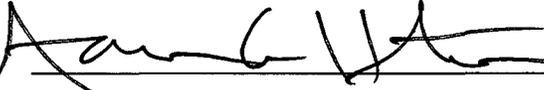
The proposed action has no effect on the elements of the environment described above; therefore there is no potential for significant impacts. Project Design features are described in section **A.** under the description of the Proposed Action. No additional mitigation measures are required.

**D. Signature:**

Specialist Review and Concurrence:

None required or

Review Required	Review Not Required	Resource	Name	Initial
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aquatic/Fisheries		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Botany		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fuels	Barbara Raible	<i>BR</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology/Soils	Chester Novak	<i>CN</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEPA Compliance	Carolyn Sands	<i>CDS</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supervisory NRS		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recreation		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Team Lead	Mike Crawford	<i>MC</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Silviculture	Bob Ohrn	<i>RAO</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree Removal	Sandra Holmberg	<i>SH</i>

**Authorized Official:**  Date: 8/31/09  
**Name:** Aaron Horton  
**Title:** Salem District Manager

**Contact Person:** For additional information concerning this project, contact Randy Gould (503) 375-5682.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
SALEM DISTRICT, CASCADES RESOURCE AREA

**Decision Record**

Based on the attached Categorical Exclusion Documentation, DOI-BLM-OR-S000-2009-0002-CX, I have determined that the proposed action, clearing and planting orchard blocks at the Horning Seed Orchard involves no significant impacts to the human environment and requires no further environmental analysis.

It is my decision to clear and plant orchard blocks, as described in the attached Categorical Exclusion Documentation, DOI-BLM-OR-S000-2009-0002-CX.

Implementation: This project will be implemented September 15, 2009.

For additional information concerning this project, contact Randy Gould, District Planner, Salem District Office 1717 Fabry Rd SE, Salem, OR, 97306, (503) 375-5682.

Authorized Official:   
Aaron Horton  
Salem District Manager

Date: 8/3/09