

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-S000-2010-0001-CX

Date: 4/27/2010

Proposed Action Title/Type: Horning Orchard Roguing/Thinning Stewardship

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

Land Use Allocation(s) Administratively Withdrawn, Non-Forest Agriculture (NA)

Description of Proposed Action:

The Horning Seed Orchard is located in Colton, Oregon. Horning 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 red cedar, western hemlock, noble fir, sugar pine, and western white pine are also present.

As orchards age, within-tree competition begins to impact crown structure, which ultimately reduces cone production capacity. Orchard thinning provides an opportunity to control tree spacing, maintain/improve crown structure, and remove dead and dying material. Additionally, the genetic quality of the residual orchard stand can be improved by removing lower ranking clones (roguing). Several orchards are also over-designed and have more acres than are required to meet current and future seed needs; removal of trees in such areas eliminates excess seed production capacity, reduces operational complexity, and provides additional space for future development.

The proposed action is to rogue/thin up to 70% of the trees from seven Douglas-fir (DF) and two noble fir (NF) orchard units over a three year period. This project will affect approximately 83 acres and remove up to 3,126 trees (see Table 1).

- Conifers may be removed by chainsaw, pushing/pulling, or mechanized falling/yarding.
- Biomass will be removed from the orchard, either in the form of logs, chips, or other wood fiber.
- Stump grinding will be utilized to remove operational/safety hazards created by stumps in thinned/rogued areas.

Table 1: Proposed Action

Proposed Treatment Year	Orchard Unit	Orchard Acres	Avg. Diameter Breast Height (inches)	Trees per Orchard			
				Current	Proposed Treatment		
					Thin/Rogue	Residual	
2010	I30	9.8	10	660	450	210	
	I31	5.5	8	480	280	200	
	I33	15.4	11	950	770	180	
	P31	3.8	11	440	285	155	
	P32	4.3	11	300	210	90	
	Sequoia ¹	1.2	21	131	131	-	
	Total (2010)	40.0			2,961	2,126	835
2011	I11 ²	19.0	11	500	450	50	
	I13 ³	11.0	11	300	300	-	
	Total (2011)	30.0			800	750	50
2012	B50	6.6	18	390	150	240	
	B51	6.0	18	280	100	180	
	Total (2012)	12.6			670	250	420
Total (2010-2012)		82.6			4,431	3,126	1,305

¹ Sequoia adjacent to I31 and I33 to be rogued.

² Most trees will be rogued from 19 of the 29 total orchard acres. No tree removal on 10 acres.

³ All trees will be rogued from 11 of the 21 total orchard acres. No tree removal on 10 acres.

Project Design Features:

General

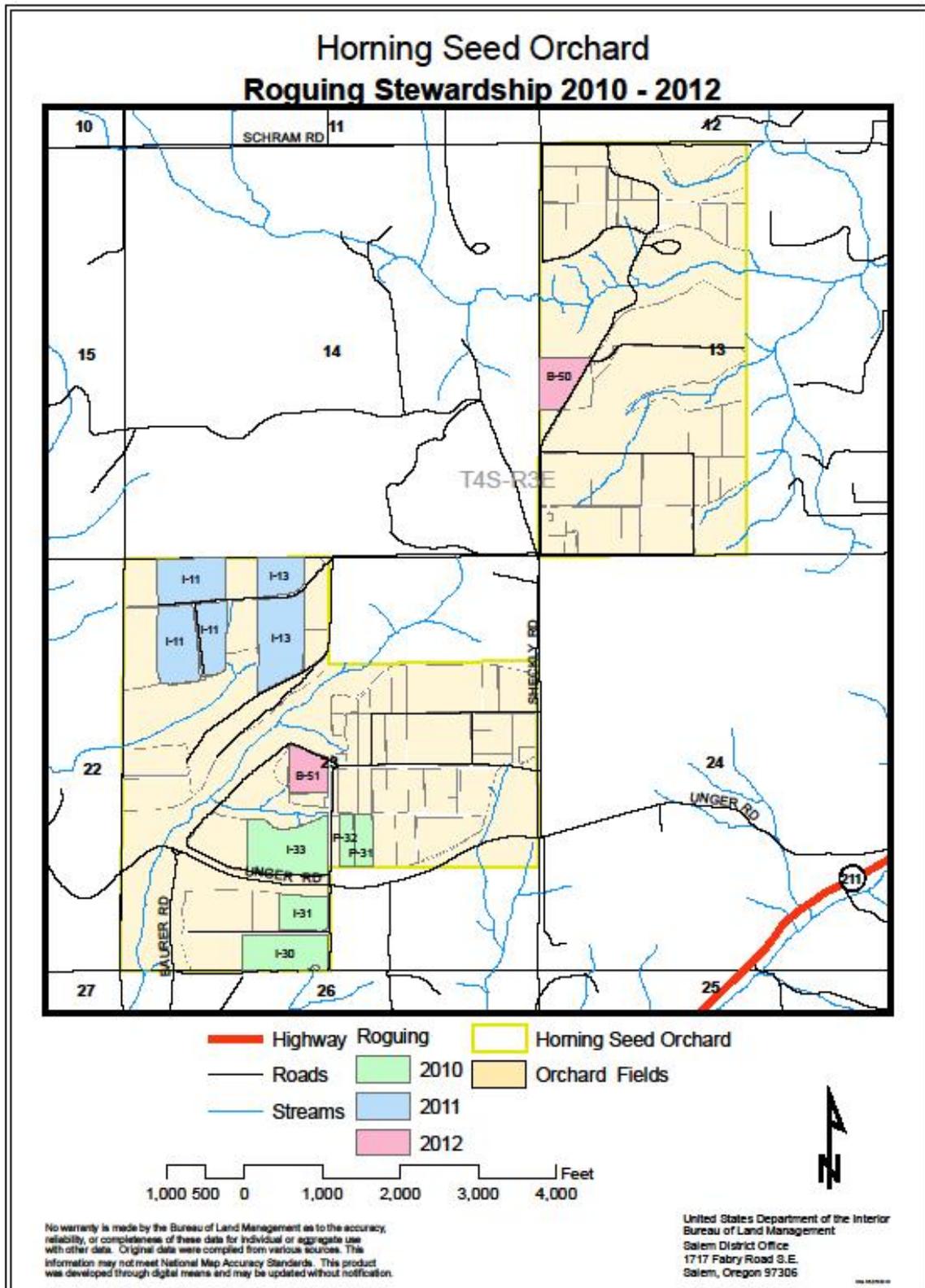
- No debris piling will be allowed within 200 ft. of streams.
- Refueling and servicing equipment will take place on or near gravel orchard roads, at least 200 ft. from streams.
- The Contractor will be required to clean all equipment using a pressure washer prior to entry on BLM lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and root disease.

Thinning/Roguing Tree Removal

- Contractor will remove all trees from the existing Douglas-fir and noble fir units (see Table 1) and move them 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.
- Sequoias can be removed with roots attached (by pushing/pulling) to be decked at the orchard for utilization in future aquatic restoration projects or utilized as other biomass.
- Harvest equipment operation will take place between mid-June and early November. No skidding will take place during wet soil conditions as determined by the authorized officer.
- All biomass resulting from thinning/roguing operations will be removed from the orchard for utilization, reducing on-site fire potential by fuels reduction and eliminating the need to burn residual slash piles.

Stump Removal

- Residual stumps resulting from thinning/roguing will be ground to a depth of 1 inch below the surface level to reduce safety/operational hazards.



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).

The proposed action is in conformance with the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (1995 RMP) as the plan includes the following direction: “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.” (1995 RMP p. 58, Appendix E-1,E-2)

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 2: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
<p>2.1/ Have significant impacts on public health or safety? Rationale: The proposed action to remove (rogue) up to 70% of the trees from seven DF and two NF orchard units will have no impacts on public health or safety therefore would have no significant impacts on public health or safety. All proposed activities follow establish Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety.</p>		No
<p>2.2/ 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 roguing is outside of any unique areas such as those discussed above.</p>		No
<p>2.3/ Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2) (E)]? Rationale: The effects of this action to remove (rogue) up to 70% of the trees from seven DF and two NF orchard units are not controversial and there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The effects of orchard roguing are not controversial. This roguing is consistent with orchard management for improving genetic native stock. No excavation will be done during excessively wet periods to minimize the</p>		No

Table 2: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
chance for runoff.		
2.4/ Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? Rationale: The proposed action to remove (rogue) up to 70% of the trees from seven DF and two NF orchard units are not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas without highly controversial, highly uncertain, or unique or unknown risks.		No
2.5/ Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? Rationale: Implementation of roguing orchard units does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. See 2.4.		No
2.6/ Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? Rationale: There are no cumulative effects associated with roguing; therefore there are no significant cumulative effects as a result of these actions.		No
2.7/ 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? Rationale: No properties listed or eligible for listing are affected.		No
2.8/ 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? 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.		No
2.9/ Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? 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.		No
2.10/ Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)? Rationale: The proposed action is not anticipated to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations associated with orchard clearing/orchard establishment.		No
2.11/ 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)? 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. No new ground disturbance is anticipated. Past roguing of orchards within this area have not resulted in tribal identification of concerns.		No
2.12/ 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)? 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.		No

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 2, above) apply.

I considered and reviewed the effects of the following additional elements of the environment required by management direction. Table 3 shows the effects of the proposed action on these elements of the environment.

Table 3: Additional Elements of the Environment		
Elements of the Environment	Status: Not Present, Not Affected, or Affected	Remarks
Aquatic Conservation Strategy	Not Affected	This action will have no effect on ACS strategy.
Energy (Executive Order 13212)	Not Present	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 to be added to the right-of-way agreement. No hazardous or solid wastes would 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 or suitable habitat. This project will not contribute to listing any species as T/E.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aquatic/Fisheries	Bruce Zollick	<i>BZ</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Botany	Terry Fennell	<i>TF</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	Heather Ulrich	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology	Patrick Hawe	<i>WPH</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEPA Compliance	Rich Hatfield	<i>RH</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NRSA	Rich Hatfield	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	Zack Jarrett	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stewardship Coord.	Erick Stemmerman	<i>ES</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Team Lead	Erick Stemmerman	<i>ES</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife	Jim England	<i>JE</i>

Authorized Official:

Name: Aaron Horton

Title: Salem District Manager

Rich Hatfield For Date: *6/15/2010*

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this project, contact Rich Hatfield, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, Salem District Office 1717 Fabry Road S.E. Salem, Oregon 97306, (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-S000-2010-0001-CX, I have determined that the proposed action, roguing/thinning trees in the orchard, involves no significant impacts to the human environment and requires no further environmental analysis.

It is my decision to rogue/thin trees in the orchard as described in the attached Categorical Exclusion DOI-BLM-OR-S000-2010-0001-CX.

Protests: In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this silviculture project will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the decision record is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". Protests of this project must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the decision record will be published in the Molalla Pioneer on or about June 21, 2010.

Implementation: This project will be implemented September 15, 2010.

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this project, contact Rich Hatfield, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, Salem District Office 1717 Fabry Road S.E. Salem, Oregon 97306, (503) 375-5682.

Authorized Official: Rich Hatfield
FOR Aaron Horton
Salem District Manager

Date: 6/15/2010