

Ag47 Timber Sale

Final Decision Documentation and Decision Rationale

Environmental Assessment Number OR080-04-08

July 2006

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
Salem District
Cascades Resource Area

Township 8 South, Range 1 East, Section 35;
Township 8 South, Range 2 East, Section 31 and
Township 9 South, Range 2 East, Sections 3 and 5; Willamette Meridian
Marion County, Oregon

Responsible Agency: USDI - Bureau of Land Management

Responsible Official: Cindy Enstrom, Field Manager
Cascades Resource Area
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306
(503) 375-5969

For further information, contact: Keith Walton
Cascades Resource Area
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306
(503) 375-5676



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BLM/OR/WA/PL-06/0xx+1792

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis for the Ag47 thinning project, which is documented in the Ag47 Projects environmental assessment (Ag47 Projects EA, # OR080-04-08) and the associated project file. The Proposed Action of Project 1 of the Ag47 EA is to thin 65-75 year old mixed conifer stands on 341 acres within the Matrix Land Use Allocation (LUA) and 91 acres within the adjacent Riparian Reserve LUA. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on August 10, 2004 and the EA and FONSI were then made available for public review.

Decision

My decision is based on a site-specific analysis documented in the Ag47 Projects EA, the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the *Willamette River, Lower North Santiam River and Little North Santiam River Watershed Assessments*, as well as the management direction contained in the *Salem District Resource Management Plan (RMP)* dated May 1995. I have decided to implement the Proposed Action for Project 1 of the Ag47 Projects EA with modifications described below, hereafter referred to as the “selected action”. The selected action is shown on the maps attached to this Decision Rationale. The following is a summary of this decision.

1. *Harvest:*

- Commercially thin 292 acres
 - 265 acres within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) portion of the Matrix LUA.
 - 27 acres within the Riparian Reserve LUA.
- Clear 1 acre for road rights-of-way within the GFMA portion of the Matrix LUA

Total harvest area acres were reduced from the projected area stated in the EA as a result of further field work.¹

2. *Logging*

- Yarding:
 - 251 acres (including 1 acre of right-of-way) of ground-based yarding (e.g. skidder, harvester/forwarder, shovel, etc.).
 - 42 acres of skyline yarding.
- Falling:
 - Mechanized falling/processing would be allowed on any area 40 percent slope or less.
 - Traditional hand falling would be used where mechanized falling is not done.

¹ Topographic features, avoiding areas with high snag densities or other desirable habitat characteristics (especially within the Riparian Reserve), and buffering wet areas further limited the size and the shape of the units. Approximately 12 acres were removed from the original sale layout to protect a red tree vole nest found during surveys. Thinning acres in the Riparian Reserve (RR) LUA were reduced because additional surveys found that snag densities, species diversity and spatial distributions in the stands met diversity objectives without intervention, and because some RR thinning units were associated with GFMA areas dropped from the proposal (See Table 1).

3. Road Work:

- Road Access:

- 0.19 mile of new natural surface road would be constructed to access approximately 15 acres of unit 1. This road would be decommissioned, blocked and seeded after use, during the same season it was constructed.

Change: The EA analyzed 0.5 miles of new road. This is a reduction of 0.31 miles (62 percent).

- Road Renovation:

- 12.69 miles of roadside brushing, blading, minor repairs, culvert replacement, spot rocking as needed, and ditch and culvert cleaning. Includes:
 - 2.0 miles of renovation of existing natural surface road, 1.3 miles private (to be left intact) and 0.7 miles of BLM (to be stabilized and blocked).
 - 0.82 mile of renovation of existing natural surface road. This renovation would include blading and shaping of the road surface and culvert replacement. After logging, these roads would be blocked, water barred and seeded.

Change: The EA analyzed 0.4 miles of reconstruction and 0.4 miles of maintaining existing natural surface road. This is essentially identical to what was analyzed in the EA, the differences are primarily wording.

- Other:

- 0.2 mile of existing road would be blocked.

Change: 0.2 mile reduction in road use and stabilization. Road 8-2E-31.2 was analyzed for use and stabilization. Water quality concerns led to change of layout that eliminated the need to use this road, except for a landing at its junction with the existing rocked road. Road is currently stable.

Table 1: Overview of Management Actions

Item	Analyzed in the EA	In the Selected Action	Comments
Timber Harvest - Acres			
Total Acres of Harvest	432	293	
Thinning	GFMA LUA	341	265
	Riparian Reserve LUA	91	27
Clearing vegetation for road rights-of-way	3	1	
Logging Systems - Acres			
Yarding	Ground-based	300	251
	Skyline	132	42
Falling	Mechanized	Not separately addressed.	251
Roads - Miles			
New Construction	0.5	0.19	Final layout required less road than analyzed.
Reconstruction/Improvement	0.4	0	Reconstruction reduced to renovation.
Renovation *	12.9	12.7	Combined reduction of 0.6 miles of road work.

* Includes approximately 8 miles of renovation along haul routes crossing non-federal land.

4. *Fuels Treatments:*

- Slash remaining on landings after blocking and covering yarding roads and skid trails would be piled and burned.
- Activity fuels within 100 feet of roads open for public use would be piled and burned.

5. *Old Growth Remnant/Snag/CWD Habitat:*

- Old growth remnant trees have been protected by unit layout. Contract empowers BLM personnel to require operations designed to prevent incidental damage.
- Any snags or CWD larger than 20 inches diameter that are encountered during operations would be protected from damage or disturbance by logging operations under standard contractual logging procedures, BMP, and OSHA requirements. If any such snag needs to be cut or is accidentally knocked down, it would remain on site as CWD. Unit layout reserved areas with high incidence of snags.

6. *Project Design Features:*

- In addition to the above, a summary of the design features, incorporated into the timber sale contract, are described in the Ag47 Projects EA (EA pp. 5-11).

Compliance with Direction

The analysis in this Ag47 Projects EA is site-specific and supplements analyses found in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, September 1994 (RMP/FEIS). This project has been designed to conform to the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, May 1995 (RMP) and related documents which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District (EA section 1.2). All of these documents may be reviewed at the Cascades Resource Area office.

Survey and Manage Species and Special Status Species: With regard to Special Status and “Survey and Manage” species, the proposed project complies with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*, January, 2001 (SM/ROD) and *Implementation of 2003 Survey and Manage Annual Species Review*, December 2003. The selected action is in compliance with Judge Marsha Pechman's January, 2006 ruling on the 2004 Record of Decision for Survey and Manage Standards and Guidelines, as stated in Point (3) on page 14 of the January 9, 2006, Court order in Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al. v. Rey et al. (DR Appendix 3 and 4 – Compliance with Survey and Manage Direction). No additional surveys are planned for the area as currently designed.

Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Status Review:

The following information was considered in the analysis of Ag47 Project 1: a/ *Scientific Evaluation of the Status of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Sustainable Ecosystems Institute, Courtney et al. 2004); b/ *Status and Trends in Demography of Northern Spotted Owls, 1985-2003* (Anthony et al. 2004); c/ *Northern Spotted Owl Five Year Review: Summary and Evaluation* (USFWS, November 2004); and *Northwest Forest Plan – The First Ten Years (1994-2003)*: d/ *Status and trend of northern spotted owl populations and habitat, PNW Station Edit Draft* (Lint, Technical Coordinator, 2005). To summarize these reports, although the agencies anticipated a decline of NSO populations under land and resource management plans during the past decade, the reports

identified greater than expected NSO population declines in Washington and northern portions of Oregon, and more stationary populations in southern Oregon and northern California.

The reports did not find a direct correlation between habitat conditions and changes in NSO populations, and they were inconclusive as to the cause of the declines. Lag effects from prior harvest of suitable habitat, competition with Barred Owls, and habitat loss due to wildfire were identified as current threats; West Nile Virus and Sudden Oak Death were identified as potential new threats. Complex interactions are likely among the various factors. This information has not been found to be in conflict with the NWFP or the RMP (*Evaluation of the Salem District Resource Management Plan Relative to Four Northern Spotted Owl Reports, September 6, 2005*).

Alternatives Considered

The EA analyzed the effects of the “proposed action” and the “no action alternative.” No unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (section 102(2) (E) of NEPA) were identified. No action alternatives were identified that would meet the purpose and need of the project and have meaningful differences in environmental effects from the proposed action (EA Section 2.1).

Reasons for the Decision

Considering the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management direction contained in the RMP and public comment, I have decided to implement the selected action as described above. My rationale for this decision follows.

The selected action:

1. Meets the purpose and need of the project (EA section 2.1), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Effect of the Selected Action and No Action Alternative on the Purpose and Need (P&N)

Purpose and Need (EA section 2.1)	Selected Action	No Action Alternative
Offer a marketable timber sale	Fulfills. Appraisal indicates that this should be a successful timber sale.	Does not fulfill. Does not result in a timber sale.
Balance wood volume production, quality of wood, and timber value at harvest.	Maintains volume production over the course of the rotation, and lengthens the rotation. However, logs at end of rotation would be larger diameter, which generally increases quantity, quality and value in conifer species compared to unthinned stands.	Does not provide for intermediate harvest at this time (delays achievement of this part of P&N), but meets wood volume production over course of rotation. Logs at the end of the normal timber harvest rotation would be smaller diameter, which generally reduces quantity, quality and value compared to thinned stands.
Maintain a healthy forest ecosystem with habitat to support plant and animal populations and protect riparian areas and water resources	Retains the element described under “no action” on untreated areas of the stands in the project area and encourages development of larger diameter trees and more open stand conditions in treated areas. This adds an element of diversity over the landscape not provided on BLM lands under the “no action” alternative.	Retains the element of stands with higher density, smaller tree diameters and increasing levels of small size CWD for the next decade or more in all stands in the project area. Retains element of moderately stocked stands with closed canopy in areas that have already been thinned once.

Purpose and Need (EA section 2.1)	Selected Action	No Action Alternative
Increase diameter growth rate in Riparian Reserves to restore large conifers sooner.	Fulfills by concentrating stand growth on fewer stems.	Does not fulfill. Diameter growth would continue current trajectory.
Restore habitat for riparian-dependent species. Provide for structural and spatial stand diversity on a landscape level in the long term.	Fulfills by accelerating changes in some parts of some stands to develop more elements of diversity faster. Would allow understory to develop by opening up the canopy.	Fulfills, but not as rapidly as the selected action. Maintains current trends that develop diversity slowly in these uniform, managed stands with a single canopy and limited understory development under closed canopy conditions.
Provide access for timber harvest, silvicultural practices, and fire protection.	Fulfills. Implements maintenance on feeder roads, allowing continued access for management activities. Maintains access for management and fire protection in the project area. Fixes existing problems on some spur roads.	Partially fulfills. Would delay maintenance on feeder roads, making access for silvicultural practices more difficult. Main routes would be maintained under both alternatives. Would not preclude future maintenance for management activities. Existing problems would continue unabated.
Reduce adverse effects of identified roads.		

2. Was adjusted in response to public comments (e.g. reduction in proposed road construction, exclusion of selected habitat areas).
3. Complies with the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, May 1995 (RMP) and related documents which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District (Decision Record p. 5, EA section 1.2)
4. Complies with Judge Marsha Pechman's January, 2006 ruling on the 2004 Record of Decision for Survey and Manage Standards and Guidelines, as stated in Point (3) on page 14 of the January 9, 2006, Court order in *Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al. v. Rey et al.* (DR Appendix 3 and 4 – Compliance with Survey and Manage Direction). No additional surveys are planned for the area as currently designed.
5. Takes into account new information on northern spotted owl (DR p.6).
6. Would not have significant impact on the affected elements of the environment (EA FONSI pp. iii-v) beyond those already anticipated and addressed in the RMP EIS.
7. Would minimize disturbance and clean equipment to avoid spreading weeds.

The No Action alternative was not selected because it does not meet the Purpose and Need directly, or delays the achievement of the Purpose and Need (EA section 2.1), as shown in Table 2.

Public Involvement/ Consultation/Coordination

Scoping: In compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project appeared in each Salem District Project Update, beginning with October 2003, which is mailed to over 1,070 addresses. No letters were received during the scoping period

Comment Period and Comments: The EA was made available on the Internet and notices were mailed on August 11, 2004 to approximately 54 agencies, individuals and organizations. A legal notice was placed in The Stayton Mail newspaper soliciting public input on the action on August 11, 2004. One letter was received from an organization during the EA comment period. The BLM response to substantive comments can be found in Appendix 1 of this Decision Rationale.

Consultation/Coordination: Wildlife: The Ag47 proposal was submitted for Formal Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in August 2004. Consultation with the USFWS resulted in a "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" Determination for northern spotted owl. The selected action will follow all applicable terms and conditions from the Biological Opinion issued in March 2005 [FWS reference: BO# # 1-7-05-F-0228].

Fish: A determination has been made that this project would have "no effect" on ESA listed fish. See EA section 2.4.5 and EA Appendix 1: ESA Determination of Effect on Listed Fish (EA, p. 58).

Conclusion

I have determined it is not necessary to change the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI - August 2004) for the Ag47 selected action. The Ag47 Projects EA, along with additional information contained in this document, fully covers the project. There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns about the selected action or its impacts, which were not addressed in the EA. The action is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the original EA, and the environmental impacts are within those described in the original EA and are less than or the same as those anticipated for the proposed action in that assessment. There are no site specific impacts that would require supplemental/additional information to the analysis done in the RMP/FEIS.

Protests: In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Sale is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". Protests of this sale must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the Notice of Sale will be published in The Stayton Mail on or around August 2, 2006. The planned sale date is August 30, 2006.

Contact Person: For additional information, contact Keith Walton (503) 375-5676 or Rudy Hefter (503) 315-5931, Cascades Resource Area, Salem BLM, 1717 Fabry Road SE, Salem, Oregon 97306.

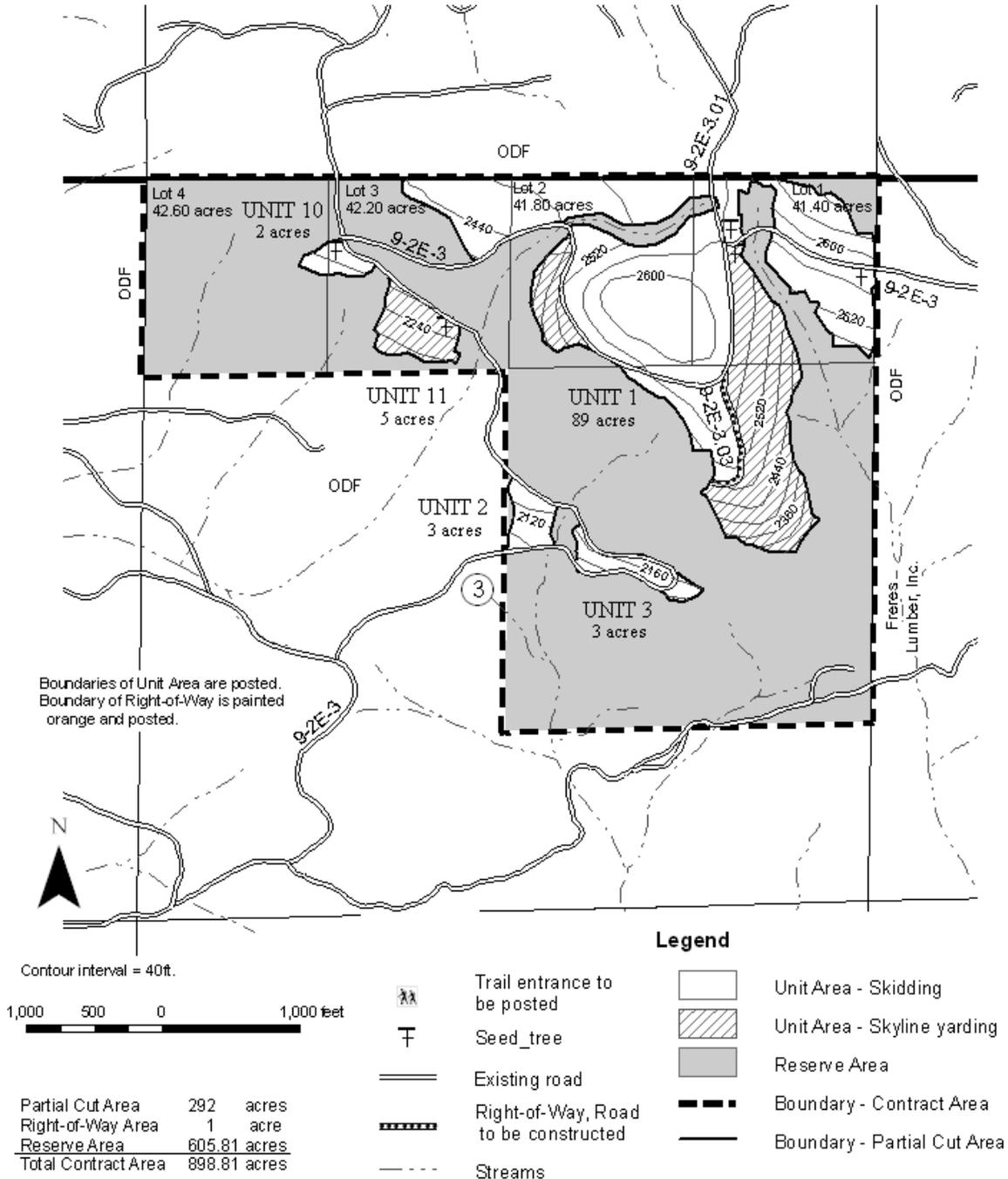
Approved by: Cindy Enstrom
Cindy Enstrom, Field Manager
Cascades Resource Area

7-27-2006
Date

June 5, 2006

United States Department of the Interior
 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
 Salem District - Oregon
 TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - CONTRACT NO. OR-080-TS06-502
 T. 9 S., R. 2 E., Section 3, W.M.

Ag 47
 EXHIBIT A
 Tract No. 2006-502
 Sheet 1 of 4



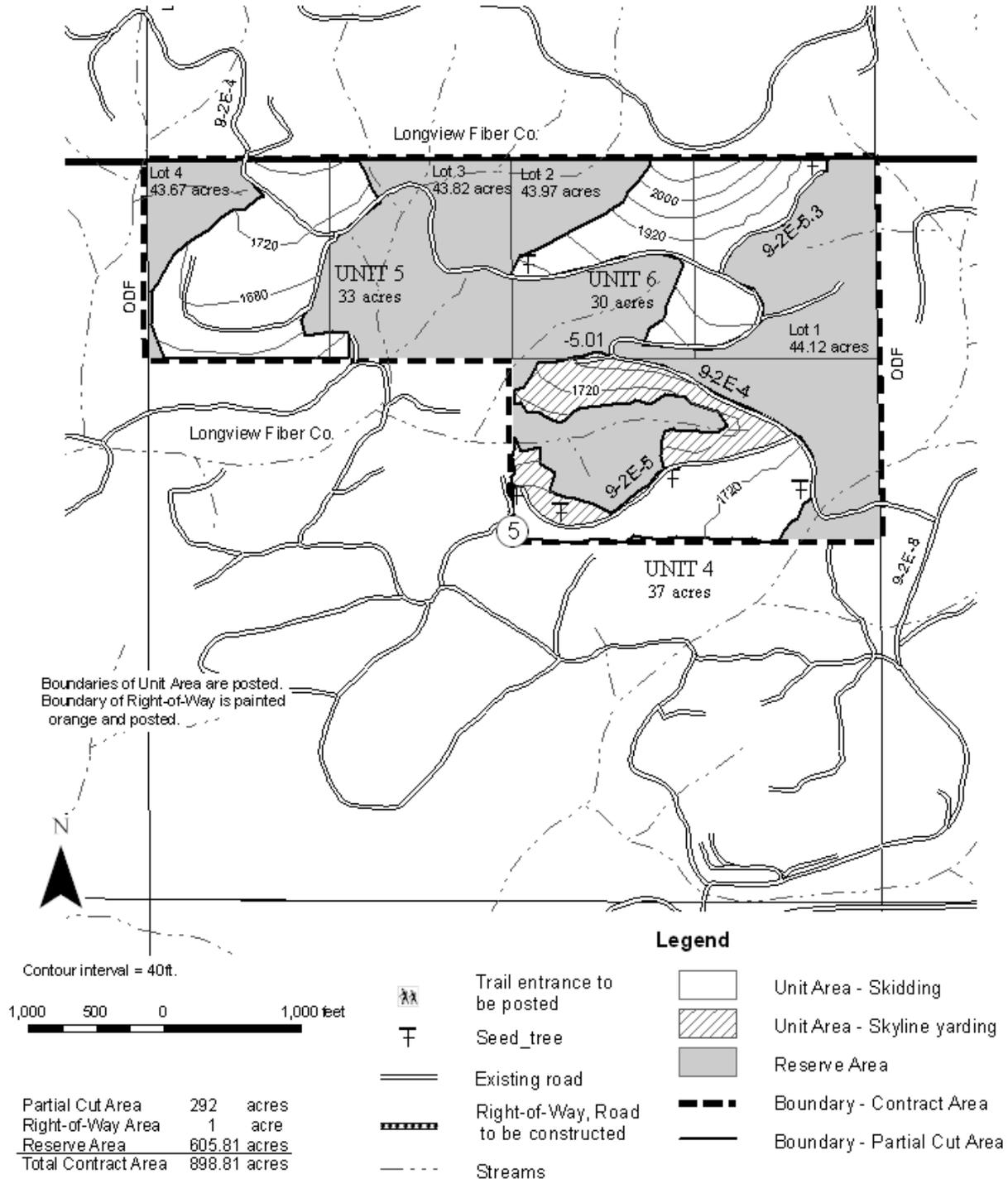
Acres shown on Exhibit A have been computed using a Trimble Pro XL Global Positioning System receiver. Acreage was calculated based on Global Positioning System traverse procedures including differential correction. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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June 5, 2006

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 Salem District - Oregon
 TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - CONTRACT NO. OR-080-TS06-502
 T. 9 S., R. 2 E., Section 5, W.M.

Ag 47
 EXHIBIT A
 Tract No. 2006-502
 Sheet 2 of 4



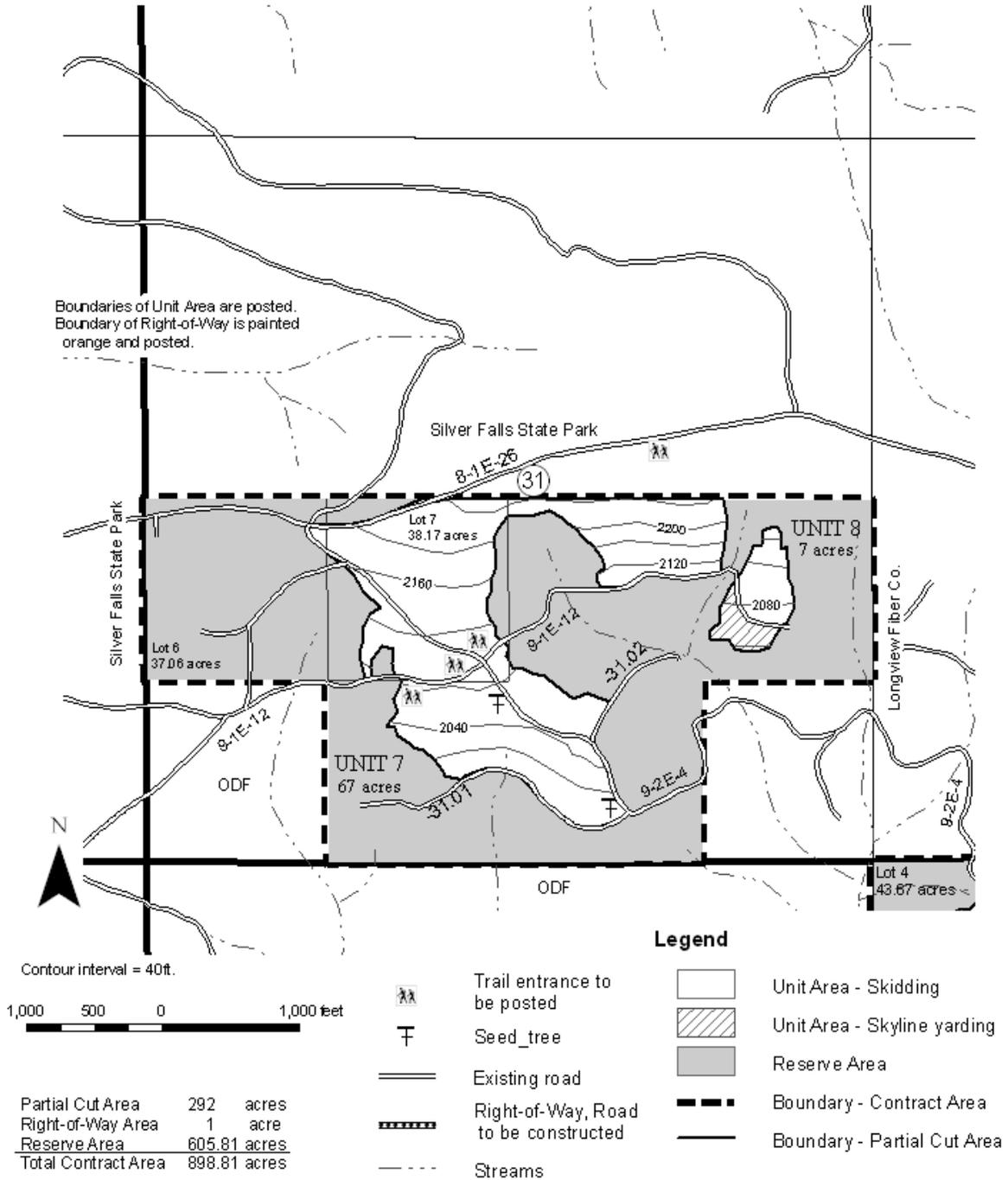
Acreage shown on Exhibit A have been computed using a Trimble Pro XL Global Positioning System receiver. Acreage was calculated based on Global Positioning System traverse procedures including differential correction. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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 Salem District - Oregon
 TIMBER SALE CONTRACT MAP - CONTRACT NO. OR-080-TS06-502
 T. 8 S., R. 2 E., Section 31, W.M.

Ag 47
 EXHIBIT A
 Tract No. 2006-502
 Sheet 3 of 4



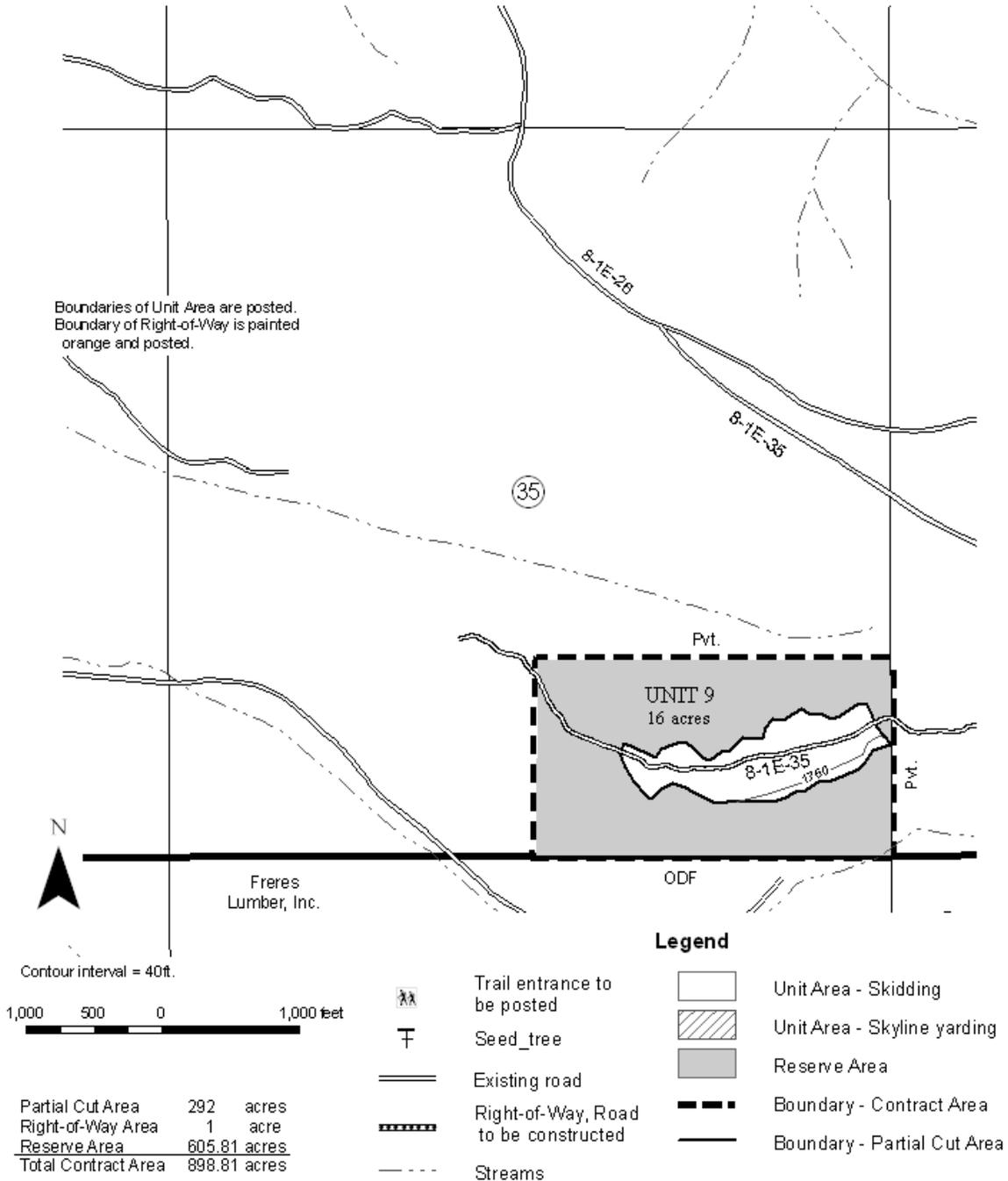
Acres shown on Exhibit A have been computed using a Trimble Pro XL Global Positioning System receiver. Acreage was calculated based on Global Positioning System traverse procedures including differential correction. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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 EXHIBIT A
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 Sheet 4 of 4



Acreage shown on Exhibit A have been computed using a Trimble Pro XL Global Positioning System receiver. Acreage was calculated based on Global Positioning System traverse procedures including differential correction. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

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Appendix 1: Response to Comments Received During the EA Public Review

The Ag47 Projects Environmental Assessment was made available for public review on August 11, 2004. Public Comments were solicited and the comment period closed on September 10, 2004. Comments were received in one letter from Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC). The major concerns raised in the comments have been consolidated and summarized.

Comments and Responses:

1. Respondent states: “This EA appears to lay out a project that is very close to the type of project we fully support.” “...we hope to see projects that propose thinning in young managed stands in matrix, riparian reserve and late-successional reserve land designations.” “In recent years, we have worked closely with BLM...planners on developing thinning projects in young stands. Many [communications with agencies] later, we have seen large projects move into the implementation stage that have resulted in...timber produced...and...young managed stands thinned with diversity and complexity major [*sic*] being principle objectives.” “ONRC believes you are on the right track with this project...”

BLM Response to #1: The BLM appreciates the positive response.

2. Respondent states: “Due to the high road density in the project area, we would prefer that no new roads be constructed with this project but may be willing to accept 0.4 miles of temporary road construction to access one unit. In the decision rationale...please disclose how many acres of land would not be treated were it not for the new road construction. Clearly, not all of unit 9-2-3 requires new roading.”

BLM Response to #2: New road construction has been kept to an absolute minimum needed to accomplish the objectives for the project. The BLM carefully weighs the impacts of all new roads relative to the impacts and costs of alternative methods to treat individual stands, or choosing to not treat the stands. Final layout includes only a single road of 0.19 miles to be constructed – less than half of the originally proposed construction. This road accesses approximately 2 acres of Riparian Reserve and 10 acres of GFMA forests to be treated in this project. This road location would also be used for logging in future management.

Please note that items 3, 5, 6 and 7 are all very closely related. For the BLM response we have followed the basic organization of ONRC’s letter and broadly grouped the comments with the following emphases:

- *Item 3: Variable density thinning in GFMA*
- *Item 5: Management objectives and methods in Riparian Reserves and LSR*
- *Item 6: Managing forests, especially in the GFMA, for biocomplexity and habitat.*
- *Item 7: Scale of planning and analysis used to evaluate complexity, variations in density, etc.*

3. Respondent states: “We believe the BLM should use variable density thinning prescriptions in all young stand thinning projects regardless of land allocation (but especially in Riparian Reserves and Late-Successional Reserves)” “In the GFMA thinning prescriptions...there appears to be nothing there than promotes variability in spacing...there is absolutely no evidence that this [variable density] will occur...there is no effort placed into introducing any true variability

between and among stands when it comes to spacing...this kind of thinning practice will not result in many of the environmental effects listed on page 19 as well as if the stands were thinned to a more variable density...all the current science regarding development of late-successional forest suggests that truly variable density thinning is much more successful.” “Most important, we argue that true variable density thinning would provide the greatest number of future management options that would not be available in untreated stands. This is another goal listed on page 19 of the EA.”

BLM Response to #3: The BLM agrees with most of the basic concepts presented by ONRC in this comment and has incorporated design features that implement many principles of diversity, complexity and habitat (EA pp. 9, 10, 19). However, the BLM did not propose, or claim to achieve, all aspects of “variable density thinning” as variously described in sources referenced by ONRC. Development of late-successional forests in GFMA is not listed as an objective of the RMP, nor is it an objective for this project.

ONRC did not identify specific additional practices that they believe should have been included in the project design. Nor did they provide evidence that the proposed thinning would not accomplish most of the objectives attributed to variable density thinning or that the proposed thinning would not reasonably accomplish all of the BLM’s stated objectives (EA pp. 4, 9, 10) or differ on the anticipated effects (EA p. 19). The objectives described for GFMA portions of this timber sale are listed under EA section 2.1 Purpose of and Need for Action (EA p. 4). See also RMP pp. 20-22.

4. Respondent makes statements about Projects 2 (Riparian Reserve treatments without wood removal) and 3 (LSR thinning).

BLM Response to #4: These are separate projects, analyzed in the same EA as Project 1, the Ag47 timber sale, for convenience and efficiency. The projects are not directly connected or interrelated. Project 3, the LSR thinning, is currently planned for implementation as part of the Snake Creek timber sale in 2007. The respondent’s comments on Project 3 will be addressed in the decision rationale for the Snake Creek timber sale.

Project 2 is, as the respondent notes, “subject to available funding” and the respondent’s comments would be addressed when the decision to implement Project 2 is made.

5. Respondent states: “Riparian reserves have very different objectives than do GFMA lands and the prescriptions should be designed to promote late-successional characteristics, not slightly larger, evenly spaced stands.” “We do recognize that windthrow can be a major issue...[a]ll the same, BLM must develop thinning protocols either in single or multiple entries that promote the objectives laid out in the Northwest Forest Plan regarding reserves.”

BLM Response to #5: The BLM agrees that the Riparian Reserves objectives and treatment regimes are very different than for GFMA. ONRC’s thoughtful comments on this subject coincide with the BLM’s original intent to analyze and treat, or defer treatment of, stands in Riparian Reserves to achieve long range biocomplexity and habitat goals. The BLM believes that the design features of the project fulfill those objectives.

The BLM also recognizes that multiple entries are needed to fully develop the desired complex stand structure. The IDT that developed the project analyzed the stands and concluded that for this entry, the prescription for treatment of Riparian Reserve stands in this area would be similar to the prescription for the GFMA portion. Future treatments to develop stand complexity and habitat features in the Riparian Reserves are expected to be very different from future treatments designed to manage for timber production in GFMA.

6. Respondent states: “It is time to start intentionally managing our forests for biocomplexity and resiliency.” “The great benefits in terms of ecosystem processes far outweigh any minor loss of future timber value. The Matrix is not a tree farm. It still has a role to play in providing diverse habitats, so don’t just grow *trees*, grow *forests*.”

BLM Response to #6:

The Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP) provides the guidance for our land management objectives. Re-evaluation of management objectives for Matrix lands is beyond the scope of this EA. On GFMA designated lands, the RMP directs the BLM to manage timber stands to promote tree survival and growth and to achieve a balance between wood volume production, quality of wood, and timber value at harvest over the lifetime of a timber stand, and to reduce the risk of loss. The commercial thinnings prescribed here are designed to provide an intermediate harvest of volume and to promote accelerated growth of the residual trees resulting in bigger and more valuable trees for harvest later in the timber stand rotation. The larger trees would also provide more viable options for snag habitat and retention of large green (legacy) trees.

The RMP also gives objectives to provide a variety of habitat types, ranging from early to late successional and to provide for other important ecological functions (RMP p. 20). Within the GFMA, where timber production is the primary emphasis, the BLM seeks to balance timber, habitat and other objectives with layout, prescriptions and other design features that are designed to provide different habitats while producing timber. On a landscape level, only 27 percent of BLM land in the Salem District is GFMA (RMP pp. 1, 10, 21). The relatively small area affected by stand treatments and harvest each year is needed to provide different types of habitat characteristics and other aspects of effective forest management on a landscape level. On a local level, the diversity created by selection of treatment areas and the treatments themselves (see responses # 3, 5 and 7) also contribute to managing forests, not just timber. The EA (p. 10) addressed this design feature as: “Treatment boundaries in Riparian Reserves and “no treatment” areas with special habitat characteristics throughout the project area would be delineated.”

Based on the project design and analysis, the BLM believes that the proposed action would provide most of the benefits to the ecosystem that ONRC encourages while meeting timber production objectives. If the respondents have specific information indicating that this is not the case or have site specific recommendations about specific practices to better meet objectives, or models that quantify the “minor” scale of loss of future timber value by implementing specific practices, they have not presented that information.

7. Respondent states: "...[use] very small scales to plan and analyze the effectiveness of creating varying densities." "...typical commercial thinning does not encourage the patchy distribution of overstory trees and the variety of understory microclimates to typical of late-seral forests. If this project is truly going to promote variable residual density between and among stands, BLM must develop a thinning protocol that fits with the current science." "We encourage the agency to manage for biocomplexity by first conserving all existing complex forests, and second, in simplified forests, by developing multiple tree species including hardwoods, understory plant diversity, and decaying trees that support...[e]ncouraging this diversity of species and structures will require a patchwork of different forest conditions within and between forest stands."

BLM Response to #7: The respondent did not define "very small scales" for managing these stands. However, this project was designed around existing terrain, stand and historical features ranging from habitat features smaller than one acre to ownership blocks up to 320 acres.

- The size of the individual ownership blocks was already fairly small, ranging from 80-320 acres. Within these relatively small areas, multiple stands were identified based on timber stand type, land use allocation, previous management activities, topography, brush/low stocking areas, areas with high snag density, presence or absence of survey and manage species, and open areas. The size of treatment areas (sale units) within the ownership blocks ranges from two to 89 acres. Within the larger treatment areas, several different areas with different characteristics were identified, evaluated and treated accordingly.
- Many areas that were suitable for timber harvest were excluded from the project treatment area for many reasons, including: open/patchy/brushy/grassy areas identified as having desirable elements of complexity; areas with high snag density; and small areas that could not be logged this entry without building new roads. Other small areas were excluded to make logical harvest unit boundaries rather than convoluted boundaries that precisely followed the edges of the excluded areas described above.
- In addition, several unmapped springs and intermittent streams were found in the project area and were protected. The associated Riparian Reserves then influenced design features around them.
- Logging system requirements are designed to protect multiple site-specific features (EA pp. 8-11).

The combination of historical practices, stand replacement fires, the effects of terrain on both natural and managed stand history, and current management has created a "patchwork of different forest conditions within and between forest stands."

8. Respondent states: "We are not concerned with the retention of small hard snags. We appreciate your efforts to retain all large old trees and large snags. In a few decades, when the released trees are larger, we suggest you come back and create more snags."

BLM Response to #8: We appreciate the clear statement regarding snag retention. The BLM recognizes that all snags play a role in ecosystem function and retains them on site as woody debris when they are felled to provide for safe logging operations.

The BLM not only fully intends to create more snags in the future when the trees are larger, but has also included a provision in the timber sale contract to create up to 300 snags and deformed top trees by base girdling and topping green trees in the contract area.

Appendix 2: Crossover between EA and Contract Unit Numbers

Table 3: Crossover between EA and Contract Unit Numbers

In the EA, the units in each section were collectively referred to by a parcel name, based on nearby streams. Individual units were referenced by description within the section when necessary.

“Contract” Unit # (Unit(s) on the Exhibit A Map)	Section	EA Name
1, 2, 3, 10 & 11	T9S, R2E, Sec. 3	Pollystout parcel
4, 5 & 6	T9S, R2E, Sec. 5	Shellburg parcel
7 & 8	T8S, R1E, Sec. 31	Smith Creek parcel
9	T8S, R1E, Sec. 35	Mill Creek parcel

Insert Appendix 3: 2001 Survey & Manage ROD Compliance Review - Wildlife Species

Appendix 3: 2001 ROD Compliance Review: Survey & Manage Wildlife Species

Environmental Analysis File
Salem District BLM – Cascades Resource Area

Project Name: AG 47

Project Type: Commercial Thinning

Location: T.8S, R.1E, Sec. 35, T.9S, R.2E, Sec. 3 and 5, T. 8S, R.2E, Sec. 3, Willamette Meridian.

Prepared By: Lisa Reynolds

Date: July 27, 2006

List Date: December 19, 2003

Table A. Survey & Manage Wildlife Species. Species listed below include those vertebrate species whose known range includes the Salem District according to *Survey Protocols for Amphibians under the Survey & Manage Provision of the Northwest Forest Plan v3.0* (1999), *Survey Protocol for the Great Gray Owl within the Range of the Northwest Forest Plan v3.0* (Jan. 2004), *Survey Protocol for the Red Tree Vole v2.1* (Oct. 2002) and those mollusk species that are known or suspected within the District according to the *Survey Protocol for S&M Terrestrial Mollusk Species v3.0* (Feb. 2003).

SPECIES	S&M CATEGORY	SURVEY TRIGGERS			SURVEY RESULTS			SITE MANAGEMENT?
		Within range of the species?	Project contains suitable habitat?	Project may negatively affect species/habitat?	Surveys Required?	Survey Date (month/year)	Sites Known or Found?	
Vertebrates								
Larch Mountain Salamander ¹ (<i>Plethodon larselli</i>)	A	N	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA
Great Gray Owl ² (<i>Strix nebulosa</i>)	A	Y	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA
Oregon Red Tree Vole ³ (<i>Arborimus longicaudus</i>)	C	Y	Y	Y	Y	June to Dec. 2003	Y	Y (5 sites)
Mollusks								
Puget Oregonian ⁴ (<i>Cryptomasix devia</i>)	A	Y	N	NA	N	Fall 2003 and Spring 2004	N ¹⁰	NA
Crater Lake Tightcoil ⁵ (<i>Pristiloma arcticum crateris</i>)	A	Y	N	N	N	Fall 2003 and Spring 2004	N ¹⁰	NA
Evening Fieldslug ⁶ (<i>Deroceras hesperium</i>)	B	Y	N	N	N	Fall 2003 and Spring 2004	N ¹⁰	NA
Columbia Dusksnail ⁷ (<i>Lyogyrus</i> n. sp. 1)	A	N	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA
Basalt Juga ⁸ (<i>Juga</i> [<i>Oreobasis</i>] n. sp. 2)	A	N	N	NA	N	NA	NA	NA

NA = Not Applicable

- ¹ In the Salem District, the range of the Larch Mountain salamander is only in the very northern portion of the Cascades Resource Area, within 14 miles of the Columbia River, east of the confluence with the Sandy River according to *Survey Protocols for Amphibians under the Survey & Manage Provision of the Northwest Forest Plan v3.0* (1999) pages 262 and 269. The project area is not within this location.
- ² Pre-disturbance surveys for great gray owls are not required within the project area. The required habitat characteristics of suitable habitat in Oregon Western Cascades Physiographic Province includes: (1) large diameter nest trees, (2) forest for roosting cover, and (3) proximity [within 200m] to openings that could be used as foraging areas (*Survey Protocol for the Great Gray Owl within the range of the Northwest Forest Plan v3.0*, January 12, 2004 pg 13). It is not necessary to survey suitable nesting habitat adjacent to natural openings smaller than 10 acres (page 5) and pre-disturbance surveys are not suggested in suitable nesting habitat adjacent to man-made openings at this time (pg. 14). One unit, Unit 2, has suitable nesting habitat however, it is not located adjacent to natural openings greater than 10 acres.
- ³ In general, the red tree vole was removed from the Survey and Manage program in the mesic zone as a result of the 2003 Annual Species Review process. In the Salem District, predisturbance surveys for red tree voles are required to be conducted only in suitable habitat of the North Mesic Zone of their range, and the project area falls within this zone.
- ⁴ In the Salem District, the range of *Cryptomastix devia* is limited to the Tillamook Resource Area and Clackamas County and Multnomah County in the Cascades Resource Area. The project area is not within this range.
- ⁵ In the Salem District, *Pristiloma articum crateris* is suspected to occur above 2,000 feet elevation in the Cascades Resource Area only. This species is “limited to perennially wet situations in mature conifer forests, among rushes, mosses and other surface vegetation or under rocks and woody debris within 10 m of open water in wetlands, springs, seeps and riparian areas, generally in areas which remain under snow for long periods in the winter.” Unless these specific habitats will be disturbed, no surveys are necessary. The described habitats are not present within the project area and will not be disturbed.
- ⁶ In the Salem District, *Derocerus hesperium* has the potential to occur in all three resource areas however it is “limited to moist surface vegetation and cover objects within 30 m (98 ft.) of perennial wetlands, springs seeps and riparian areas.” Unless these specific habitats will be disturbed, no surveys are necessary. Where habitat is present, equivalent-effort pre-disturbance surveys are required for this species. The described habitats are not present within the project area and will not be disturbed.
- ⁷ *Lyogyrus* n. sp. 1 is a Columbia Gorge endemic, found on both sides from east and south of Portland to Hood River, Oregon. Most sites are in Gorge tributaries; a few other sites occur in drainages originating from near Mount Hood, Oregon, to Mount St. Helens, Washington. In the Salem District, it is likely to be found only in the Cascades Resource Area, and only in cold, pure, well-oxygenated springs within a few miles of the Columbia River in Multnomah County. This project is not tributary to the Columbia Gorge. The described habitats are not present within the project area.
- ⁸ *Juga* n. sp. 1 is a Columbia Gorge endemic, and is found sporadically in springs in the central and eastern portions of the Columbia Gorge on the Oregon side only in Hood River and Wasco counties, Oregon, including sites in Mount Hood National Forest and sites in Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. In the Salem District, it is likely to be found only in the Cascades Resource Area, and only in cold, pure, well-oxygenated springs within a few miles of the Columbia River in Multnomah County. The project is not located in Multnomah County and is not tributary to the Columbia Gorge. The described habitats are not present within the project area.
- ⁹ Management calls for 10 acre reserves around known sites (Management Recommendations for the Oregon Red Tree Vole, Version 2.0, September 27, 2000).
- ¹⁰ Although surveys were not required for Category A (*Cryptomastix devia*), Category A (*Pristiloma arcticum*), and Category B (*crateris Deroceras hesperium*) and since the species was within the range of the proposed project area a decision was made to survey for the species to increase the Cascades Resource Area’s inventory base.

Statement of Compliance. Pre-disturbance surveys and management of known sites required by protocol standards to comply with the 2001 Record of Decision and Standard and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines (as the 2001 ROD was amended or modified as of March 21, 2004) were completed for the AG 47 Thinning project. There are no known Category B, D, E, and F species within the AG 47 Thinning project area.

One known site of a Survey & Manage species (Red Tree Vole, Category C) that requires management within the project area was located. Management of active red tree vole sites calls for a 10 acre buffer around the site. To protect the active nest that was found as a result of protocol surveys, I have modified the AG 47 Timber Sale by removing 12 acres from Unit 1. Four sites found were avoided by project design that required no further management action.

Therefore, based on the preceding information (refer to Table A above) regarding the status of surveys and site management for Survey & Manage wildlife species, it is my determination that the AG 47 Thinning project complies with the provisions of the 2001 Record of Decision and Standard and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines (as the 2001 ROD was amended or modified as of March 21, 2004). For the foregoing reasons, this project is in compliance with the 2001 ROD as stated in Point (3) on page 14 of the January 9, 2006, Court order in Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al. v. Rey et al.

Signature:

Cindy Enstrom,  Cascades Resource Area Manager

Date:

7/27/2006

Insert Appendix 4: 2001 Survey & Manage ROD Compliance Review - Botany Species

Appendix 4: 2001 ROD Compliance Review: Survey & Manage Botany Species

Environmental Analysis File

Salem District Bureau of Land Management – Cascade Resource Area

Project Name: AG47 Timber Sale

Prepared By: Terry Fennell

Project Type: Commercial Thinning

Date: 03/13/2006

Location: Areas of Proposed Action in T8S,R1E,Sec.35, T8S,R2E,Sec.31, T9S,R2E,Sec.3,5

S&M List Date: December 2003

Table A. Survey & Manage Species Known and Suspected in the Salem District. Species listed below were compiled from the 2003 Annual Species Review (IM-OR-2004-034) and includes all species in which pre-disturbance surveys may be needed (Category A, C and non-fungi Category B species if the project occurs in old-growth as defined on page 79-80 of the 2001 ROD) and lists known sites of other survey and manage species that are known to occur within the project area. In addition, the table indicates whether or not a survey was required, survey results and site management.

The following survey protocols and literature were used in determining species known range, habitat and survey methodology. All field surveys were conducted using the intuitive controlled method.

Fungi:

Survey Protocols for *Bridgeoporus* (= *Oxyporus*) *nobilissimus* (Version 2.0, May 1998)

Handbook to Strategy 1 Fungal Species in the Northwest Forest Plan (Oct. 1999)

Handbook to Additional Fungal Species of Concern in the Northwest Forest plan (Jan. 2003)

Lichens:

Survey Protocols for Component 2 Lichens (Version 2.0, March 1998)

Management Recommendations for Survey and Manage Lichens (Version 2.0, March 2, 2000)

Survey Protocols for Survey and Manage Category A & C Lichens in the Northwest Forest Plan Area (Version 2.1 (2003)

2003 Amendment to the Survey Protocol for Survey and Manage Category A & C Lichens. (Version 2.1 Amendment, September 2003)

Survey Protocol Guidance For Conducting Equivalent Effort Surveys Under the Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Standard and Guidelines. (March 2006).

Pseudocyphellaria perpetua Supplemental Guidance for Pre-Disturbance Surveys Under the Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Standard and Guidelines (March 2006).

Bryophytes:

Survey Protocols for Protection Buffer Bryophytes (Version 2.0)

Vascular Plants:

Survey Protocols for Survey and Manage Strategy 2 Vascular Plants (Version 2.0, December 1998).

All species:

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species of Oregon; Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center (May 2004).

Species	S&M Category	Survey Triggers			Survey Results			Site Management
		Within Range of the Species?	Project Contains Suitable habitat?	Project may negatively affect species/habitat?	Surveys Required?	Survey Completion Date	Sites Known or Found?	
Fungi								
<i>Bridgeoporus nobilissimus</i>	A	Yes	No	No	No ^{1,4}	N/A	No	No
Lichens								
<i>Bryoria pseudocapillaris</i>	A	No	No	No	No ²	N/A	No	No
<i>Bryoria spiralis</i>	A	No	No	No	No ²	N/A	No	No
<i>Dendrocaulon intricatum</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Hypogymnia duplicata</i>	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Leptogium cyanescens</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Lobaria linita</i> var. <i>tenuoir</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Nephroma occultum</i>	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Niebla cephalota</i>	A	No	No	No	No ²	N/A	No	No
<i>Pseudocyphellaria perpetua</i>	A	No	No	No	No ³	N/A	No	No
<i>Pseudocyphellaria rainierensis</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Teloschistes flavicans</i>	A	No	No	No	No ²	N/A	No	No
Bryophytes								
<i>Schistostega pennata</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁵	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Tetraphis geniculata</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁵	Various ⁹	No	No
Vascular Plants								
<i>Botrychium minganense</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁷	N/A	No	No
<i>Botrychium montanum</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁷	N/A	No	No
<i>Coptis asplenifolia</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁶	N/A	No	No
<i>Coptis trifolia</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁷	N/A	No	No
<i>Corydalis aquae-gelidae</i>	A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Cypripedium fasciculatum</i>	C	No	No	No	No ⁷	N/A	No	No
<i>Cypripedium montanum</i>	C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁷	Various ⁹	No	No
<i>Eucephalis vialis</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁷	N/A	No	No
<i>Galium kamtschaticum</i>	A	No	No	No	No ⁶	N/A	No	No
<i>Plantanthera orbiculata</i> var. <i>orbiculata</i>	C	No	No	No	No ⁶	N/A	No	No
Category B Species (equivalent effort surveys needed if project area includes old-growth as defined in 2001 ROD glossary, p. 79-80)								
None			Yes	N/A	No ⁸	Various ⁹	No	
Additional Category B, D, E & F known sites located within the proposed project Area								
None			Yes	N/A	No ⁸	Various ⁹	No	

- 1 This species is only associated with large diameter true fir (above 2500' in Oregon). There is no suitable habitat within or adjacent to the project area.
- 2 This species known range within the NW Forest Plan is along the immediate coast or within the coastal fog zone within sight or sound of the Pacific Ocean. This project is not within the known range.
- 3 This species is only known from Cape Perpetua on the Oregon coast. This project is not within the known range.
- 4 This species is known to occur on Bureau of Land Management lands within the Cascades Resource Area.
- 5 This species is known to occur on Forest Service lands adjacent to the Cascade Resource Area.
- 6 This species is only known from western Washington. There are no known sites in Oregon.
- 7 This species is not known to occur on Bureau of Land Management lands within the Salem District.
- 8 Although surveys are not required for Category B, D, E, and F species, if suitable habitat is present in the proposed project area these species are addressed while conducting required botanical surveys.
- 9 Survey Dates: June 04th, 05th 2003, May 10th, 13th, 19th, 20th 2004

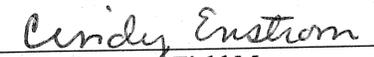
SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS : No category A, B, C, D, E or F species were identified during any survey of the proposed **AG47 Timber Sale** area.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE: Pre-disturbance surveys and management of known sites required by protocol standards to comply with the 2001 Record of Decision and Standard and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines (as the 2001 ROD was amended or modified as of March 21, 2004) were completed for **AG47 Timber Sale**. The **AG47 Timber Sale** also complies with site management for any Category B, D, and E species as identified in the 2001 ROD (as modified).

Based on the preceding information (refer to Table A above) regarding the status of surveys and site management for Survey & Manage botanical species, it is my determination that the **AG47 Timber Sale** complies with the provisions of the *2001 Record of Decision and Standard and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines* (as the 2001 ROD was amended or modified as of March 21, 2004). For the foregoing reasons, the **AG47 Timber Sale** is in compliance with the 2001 ROD as stated in Point (3) on page 14 of the January 9, 2006, Court order in Northwest Ecosystem Alliance et al. v. Rey et al.


 Terry Pennell, Botanist
 Cascade Resource Area
 Salem Bureau of Land Management

5/3/06
 Date


 Cindy Enstrom, Field Manager
 Cascade Resource Area
 Salem Bureau of Land Management

5/4/2006
 Date