

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS (FONSI) AND DECISION
RECORD/RATIONALE
Siuslaw River Fire Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan (N-897) and
Environmental Assessment EA-03-04**

Background: The Siuslaw River Fire started on Saturday August 17, 2002. When reported it was actively burning on the lower timbered slopes just east of the Siuslaw River on Bureau of Land Management land in T18S, R08W, Section 27. By the time the fire was controlled, approximately 526 acres of BLM ownership had burned, within the east half of T18S, R08W, Section 27; the northern half of T18S, R08W, Section 35; and the southwest corner of T18S, R08W, Section 25, within the Upper Siuslaw and Wolf Creek watersheds. Of the 526 acres of Bureau lands within the fire boundary, 126 acres of BLM land suffered 90-100% stand mortality. The Siuslaw River fire was declared controlled at the close of the 2002 fire season on November 8, 2002.

FONSI: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Eugene District, Siuslaw Resource Area has analyzed a proposed action, a no action alternative, a modified planting alternative, and considered other alternative treatments for accomplishment of emergency rehabilitation of burned BLM land in the Siuslaw River Fire (N-897). This emergency rehabilitation is consistent with the Eugene District Resource Management Plan (RMP/EIS) as amended and Late Successional Reserve Assessment RO267/RO268. These documents may be reviewed at the Eugene District Office.

The design features identified in the Environmental Assessment (EA) will assure that no significant adverse impacts occur to the human environment other than those already addressed in the Eugene District RMP/EIS. Only beneficial effects from the rehabilitation proposal are anticipated. Benefits include minimization of soil erosion and sedimentation, minimization of soil productivity losses, re-establishment of the forest community, maintenance of late successional reserve diversity, and minimization of noxious and invasive weed infestations.

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitutes a major federal action affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, neither a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) nor supplement to the existing EIS is necessary.

Decision: After consideration of the analysis of impacts presented in the environmental assessment, the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), the design features of the proposed action, and the other alternatives considered, it is my decision to select and implement the Modified Planting Alternative with the design features as described in the Siuslaw River Fire Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan and Environmental Assessment # 1792 A-EA-03-04. This alternative is similar to the Proposed Action, except that tree planting density will be wider spaced on units A-5 and A-7, as described in the EA. Other measures, such as the contour felling, hazard tree removal, road maintenance and repair, and seeding of firetrails and rehabilitated/closed roads will also be completed. The small Units A-4 and A-8 will not be replanted but will be monitored for natural

rehabilitation success, as will most of the fire's underburned B and C units (refer to the EA map). Monitoring the site for rehabilitation success as well as for the status of noxious weeds is part of the selected alternative.

Rationale: This Modified Planting Alternative will lead to the rehabilitation of this burned Late Successional Reserve area and would help protect water quality and soils by the re-establishment of a forested vegetation community in the long term. The project's design features will help alleviate surface soil losses and sedimentation to streams from steep firetrails during winter storms. LSR diversity will be maintained with the variable planting densities of Douglas fir, western red cedar, and hemlock. Monitoring will determine the effectiveness of treatments in meeting the Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Plan objectives, as well as any future needed rehabilitation treatments. Sufficient historical information is available from the Oxbow and Austa fires, and subsequent management and monitoring in those areas, to indicate successful rehabilitation is likely. Human health and safety are provided for by the project's design features to be carried out within OR-OSHA provided guidelines.

Administrative Review:

The decision to implement the Modified Planting Alternative for this project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of decision is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on January 15, 2003.

This published notice of decision will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of this project. 43 CFR 5003.2(b) Protests of this decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of this decision notice.

/s/ Steve Calish
Steve Calish, Field Manager, Siuslaw Resource Area

January 13, 2002
Date