

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

DECISION RECORD
Cassnor Peak II Project Timber Sale
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-04-18

Background:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Cassnor Peak II Project Timber Sale have been prepared by the Upper Willamette Resource Area, Eugene District Office. Timber harvest, road construction and road decommissioning would occur on Matrix lands as identified in the Northwest Forest Plan. The Cassnor Peak II Project Timber Sale is located in Section 19 of T. 14 S., R. 1E., Will. Mer.

The purpose of the action in the Matrix is as follows:

- to provide a sustainable supply of timber
- to salvage timber damaged by windstorms consistent with management objectives for other resources
- to manage timber stands to reduce the risk of stand loss from fires, animals, insect and diseases
- to manage developing stands on available lands to promote tree survival and growth
- to modify fuel profiles in order to lower the potential of fire ignition and rate of spread

Consultation:

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was accomplished in the "*Programmatic Biological Assessment for Activities with the Potential to Disturb Northern Spotted Owls and/or Bald Eagles in the Willamette Province for FY 2004-2005*" and will conform to the guidance in this document. Based on this document, the project is determined to be a "no effect" action for bald eagles and a "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" action for spotted owls. There will be "no effect" to spotted owl critical habitat.

Consultation with NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) for Essential Fish Habitat and listed species is not required for "No effect" activities. This activity will have no effects on listed fish.

Public Comment:

The EA and unsigned FONSI were advertised on June 23, 2004 in the Eugene Register Guard. The EA and unsigned FONSI were also available on the internet at <http://www.edo.or.blm.gov/planning>. Copies of the EA and unsigned FONSI were also mailed to interested individuals (see EA, p. 8). The public comment period ended on July 7, 2004. No comments were received. An earlier version of this EA (Cassnor Peak, EA-04-11) was issued in April 2004 and 1 comment letter was received. Responses to the 3 issues raised are below.

1. The first point was that course wood should be retained on site to supply wood for the Calapooya River in the future. First, no wood will be removed from the Riparian Reserves. It is extremely unlikely that wood on the uplands would move towards the Calapooya as a result of a debris torrent.

2. The second point made was that the RMP and NFP are not adequate to protect legacy features and the species dependent upon the habitat snags and coarse woody debris provide; also, that the BLM is obligated to use the best available science to protect public resources and must use the DecAID decision support tool. Modifying the RMP standards for coarse woody debris and snag retention would be beyond the scope of this action. BLM will soon be initiating an RMP revision, consistent with the Settlement Agreement in American Forest Resource Council v. Clarke, Civ. No. 94-1031-TPJ. In that RMP revision, BLM will evaluate relevant new scientific information related to coarse woody debris and snag levels and tools such as the DecAID model.
3. The third point made was that the EA does not disclose how many snags are currently in the stand proposed for salvage and how many of these snags are projected to be lost due to safety. As stated in the EA, existing snags will remain on site. The number of existing snags was not counted. If snags have to be removed for safety hazards they will be retained on site as down wood. It is not possible to predict how many snags will need to be cut. In addition to existing snags, an average of 3 standing trees per acre were left on site to serve as snags in the future

Finding of No Significant Impact:

On the basis of the information contained in the Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-04-18), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the proposed action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts not already addressed in the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994) and the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (June 1995), as amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, January 2001, The Record of Decision to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines (USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, March) and the Record of Decision to Clarify Provisions Relating to the Aquatics Conservation Strategy (Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, March 2004) with which this EA is in conformance, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Decision:

Based on site-specific analysis in the Environmental Assessment, the supporting record, and the management direction contained in the Eugene District Resource Management Plan, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) as analyzed in the Cassnor Peak II Project Timber Harvest Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-04-18).

Rationale for the Decision:

The Proposed Action (Alternative 2) best meets the purpose and need as described in the EA, because it will:

1. Contribute to meeting the need for a sustainable supply of timber by making approximately 742 MBF of timber available for harvest.
2. Remove timber damaged by a windstorm
3. Modify the fuel profile and reduce the fuel loading levels

The "No Action" alternative was not selected, because it would not modify the fuel profile or remove timber damage by a windstorm.

Administrative Remedies:

The decision to implement this timber sale project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 – Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on July 28, 2004. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of this timber sale project (43 CFR 5003.2b). Protests of this timber sale decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of the notice of sale.

Approved by: Emily Rice
Field Manager, Upper Willamette Resource Area

Date: 7/26/04