

DECISION NOTICE
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

RESTORATION 2003

USDA FOREST SERVICE
MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST
and
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

An Environmental Assessment (EA) titled Restoration 2003 has been prepared for wildlife habitat, fish habitat and water quality restoration projects. Projects are located across the Mt. Hood National Forest, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and on adjacent private lands. Many projects are included in the EA, but this decision notice only addresses a portion of those projects.

DECISION and RATIONALE

We have decided to select Alternative 2. Alternative 2 will meet the purpose and need discussed in the EA (page 3) by implementing the following projects:

Projects Included in This Decision	MAP ID	Project Name	Notes
X	C-1	3520.650/Robinhood	Culvert removed and not replaced.
X	C-2	3500.681/Meadows	Two culverts removed and not replaced. One replaced with log ski bridge.
X	C-3	3520/Robinhood	Culvert removed and not replaced.
	C-4	Hutson Dr/Evans	Off-Forest
X	C-5	1700.663/N Fork Mill	Culvert removed and not replaced.
	C-7a	2700/Jordan	
	C-7b	4820/Gate	
	C-8	4830/S Fork Gate	
X	C-9	4811/Threemile	
X	C-10	1721/S Fork Mill	
	C-11	4400/Eightmile	
	C-12	1600/Tony	
X	C-13	1800/Red Hill	
X	C-14	1800/Marco	
X	C-15	1800/McGee	
X	C-16	1300620/Laurel	
X	C-17	1350/Laurel	
	C-25	1520/Bridal Veil	Nine culverts
X	C-26	4600.267/Tag	Culvert removed and not replaced.
X	C-29	4620/Whale	
X	C-30	Kiwanis/L ZZ River	Two culverts
	C-37	1010/Deer	

Projects Included in This Decision	MAP ID	Project Name	Notes
	C-38	10/Deer	
	C-39	1210/S F Bull Run	
	C-40	1825.380/Cast	
	C-41	10/Cougar	
	C-42	1010/Cougar	
	C-44	10/Bear	
	C-45	1010/Bear	
	C-47	1720.193/N Fork Mill	
X	F-2	Wildcat Exclosure	
X	P-1	Wolf Run @ Eightmile	
X	Q-1	1520 road	
X	Q-2	1500.020 @ Larch Mt	
X	Q-3	2130.105 near The Dalles	
	RR-2	Bonnie Butte	Repair road 4891
	RR-3	13/1310	Road repair
	RR-4	Devils Half Acre	Repair road/bridge
	RD-1	Fishhook Roads	Obliterate most of system
X	RD-2	4300.221 and 3530.240	Convert 4300.221 to trail and obliterate 3530.240.
	RD-3	1400/1405, 1500.020, 2130.105, 8400.217, and one in Rowena.	
X	RD-4	4610.240/250 @ Shining Lake trailhead	
	RD-5a	4640.012	
	RD-5b	6322.170	
X	RD-6	2618	User created road from end of 2618
X	RD-7	Twin Springs	
	RD-8	Aschoff Rd./1820	
	IR-1	15 Mile Riverkeeper	Off-Forest portion, LWD, Repair flood damaged channel, Lyda Ditch Piping, Road Closure via gating.
X	IR-1	15 Mile Riverkeeper	On-Forest portion including approximately 300' downstream of Forest Bounday, In-stream and bank stabilization.
	IR-2	Robinhood Cr LWD	
	IR-3	Bear Cr riparian thin	
	IR-4	McGee Cr riparian thin	
	IR-5	Lake Branch riparian thin	
X	IR-6	Eagle Creek	Eagle Creek planting fish privacy screen
X	IR-7	Multnomah Falls	Multnomah Falls riparian planting
	IR-8	Upper Clackamas LWD	Between Big Bottom and Collawash
	IR-9	Summit Guard Station	Channel repair near parking lot
	IR-10	Salmon Riverkeeper	Resort @ The Mt/Wee Burn Creek, Off-Forest
	IR-11	Arrah Wana	Build upstream U's in Salmon River, Off-Forest
	IR-12	Salmon River	Side channel maintenance
	IR-13	Zigzag River	LWD and boulders
	IR-14	Little Zigzag River	LWD, boulders, bank stabilization, PCT
	IR-15	Clear Cr.	Off-Forest, LWD, boulders, planting
X	V-1	Rowena	Remove small conifers from oak stands
X	W-1	Talc	Talc TS snag and LWD creation
	W-2	Clackamas River Thinning Projects	Four snag and LWD creation projects

It is our decision to select Alternative 2 over the other alternatives considered for the following reasons:

Alternative A, the no-action alternative, was not selected because it would not provide any of the benefits described in the purpose and need. It would not provide benefits to wildlife, fish or water quality. No action would result in continuation of resource impacts such as:

- Erosion from storm damaged roads
- Blockage of fish passage by culverts that are too small, and
- Leakage and erosion from irrigation ditches.

No substantive comments were raised during scoping or the 30-day comment period.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 is the no-action alternative and was not selected because it would not repair specific problem areas that have been identified as urgent. In some cases passive restoration may occur over a long time period but in most cases, chronic problem areas would continue to prevent watersheds from becoming fully functioning and healthy in terms of water quality and fish habitats. Important fish stocks that are at risk would not be assisted toward recovery.

Consideration was given to including only the projects that had certain funding. This would have been a much shorter list of projects. The sources of potential funding are many and varied and funding may materialize in the near future.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (40 CFR 1508.27)

Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the EA, we have determined that this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination is based on the design of the selected alternative and the following factors:

- **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES** –Formal consultation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service concerning the **northern spotted owl** was not required. The projects would not modify habitat but there would be disturbance due to noise of equipment. A seasonal restriction would be used to minimize disturbance during the critical breeding period. Some of the projects would have no effect and others would have an effects determination of “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect.” These projects are covered by a programmatic biological opinion (EA page 32).

Consultation with NOAA Fisheries concerning listed **anadromous fish** has been completed for this analysis through the February 25th, 2003 Programmatic Biological Opinion for ongoing Forest Service activities. A seasonal restriction for in-stream work would minimize impact during the time of year when fish are most sensitive (EA pages 11 and 27).

There will be no adverse effects to sensitive species of plants or animals (EA pages 20, 27, 33 and 37).

Therefore, the project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species nor will it cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for any proposed or sensitive species.

- **CONSISTENCY WITH MT. HOOD FOREST PLAN AND COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN** - The proposed action is consistent with both the Management Area goals, desired future conditions, and standards and guidelines identified in the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (Forest Plan) and the management direction contained within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan.
 - Projects are consistent with the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. Streams will be enhanced and riparian reserves will be carefully managed. There would be some short-term sedimentation risk from equipment working in or near streams but the projects are carefully designed to minimize sediment. Long-term benefits would outweigh short-term impacts (EA pages 15 to 30).
 - Projects in or near wild, scenic or recreational rivers are consistent with applicable standards and guidelines and each river's outstandingly remarkable values.
 - Surveys have been conducted where needed for Survey and Manage Species. Known sites of Survey and Manage Species are being managed in accordance with management recommendations.
 - Projects are consistent with standards for scenery, wildlife management, noxious weeds, hydrology, air quality and heritage resources (EA pages 15 to 43).
- **CUMULATIVE EFFECTS** – The analysis considered not only the direct and indirect effects of the projects but also their contribution to cumulative effects. The analysis considered other potential sources of sediment such as timber harvest, road construction and activities off Forest. No significant cumulative or secondary effects were identified. The EA elaborates on cumulative impacts and cumulative benefits. It discloses that impacts would be short term and largely mitigated while benefits would be long term and substantial (EA pages 16 to 19).
- **HEALTH AND SAFETY** - There will be minimal effect on public health and safety. Job hazard analysis will be documented for projects to provide for safety of operations. A site analysis has been conducted which implements the direction given by the Record of Decision and Mediated Agreement for the "Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation" Environmental Impact Statement. The use of herbicides is not being proposed for any project. Mitigations have been included to minimize the risk of spreading noxious weeds.
- **CULTURAL RESOURCES** - Field surveys have been conducted and protection measures incorporated.

- OTHER - The effects are not likely to be highly controversial and do not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. This action will not set a precedent because other similar actions have occurred in the past. The project was not found to threaten a violation of any Federal, State, or local law. The project complies with EO 12898 regarding environmental justice. No disproportionately high adverse human or environmental effects on minorities and/or low-income populations were identified during the analysis and public information process. No significant irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources were found. There will be no affect to Wild and Scenic Rivers and State Scenic Waterways, wetlands, wilderness areas, research natural areas or any other areas with unique characteristics. The project will not affect public health or safety. Adverse and beneficial impacts have been assessed and found to be not significant.

The environmental assessment was available for a 30-day public comment period that ended on June 11, 2003. No substantive negative comments were received at that time or any time before. There has been some correspondence offering support for restoration projects.

Appeal Rights:

The decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.8

Project Implementation:

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately.

The EA can be downloaded from the Forest web site at www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/ under Forest Projects.

For further information contact Jim Roden, Estacada Ranger Station, 595 NW Industrial Way, Estacada, OR 97023. Phone: (503) 630-8722 Email: jroden@fs.fed.us

Responsible Officials:

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