



File Code: 1950

Date: May 7, 2008

Dear Interested Citizen,

The Hood River Ranger District on the Mt. Hood National Forest has identified you as an individual, agency, or organization that might be interested in commenting on our proposal to build a log deck to facilitate the delivery of approximately 400 logs to the lower 0.7 miles of Robinhood Creek. The logs would be placed in the floodplain and stream channel to improve aquatic habitat by increasing the large woody debris.

Background

Flooding in the fall of 2006 caused significant damage to the 3520 and 3520-620 roads, which eliminated access into the lower 2.0 miles of Robinhood Creek. At present, these roads will not be re-opened for vehicle use since it is impossible to predict or contain Newton Creek channel shifts. A large scale stream and riparian restoration project has been planned in the lower 1.7 miles of Robinhood Creek since 2003¹. The Forest Service was able to implement large woody debris (LWD) placement along a 0.3 mile reach in 2007 using logs that had been decked following the Mt. Hood Complex fire. Given the current conditions, there is no way to haul the remaining 425 logs needed to complete this phase of the restoration work by log truck. In order to complete the project, the Forest Service proposes delivering the remaining 425 logs needed to complete this portion of the restoration project using a heavy lift helicopter.

Purpose and Need for Action

The overall purpose of this project is to facilitate the completion of the Robinhood Creek Large Woody Debris restoration project, which will improve aquatic habitat by placing large woody debris in the stream and adjacent floodplain. In order to meet this purpose and complete the final phase of this project, there is an underlying need to deliver 425 logs by helicopter to designated decking locations along the lower 0.7 miles of Robinhood Creek.

Proposed Action

Logs will be transported via log truck from existing log decks to the proposed log deck site just east of Nottingham Campground. Approximately 200 to 300 yards of an old road closed with a berm (unnumbered) would be re-opened with a bulldozer and the logs decked in an existing opening located about 150-feet north of the Nottingham Campground access road.

Approximately 50 trees, primarily lodgepole pine less than 6-inch diameter at breast height (dbh), would need to be removed to provide access to the landing. One large cottonwood snag (approximately 26-inch dbh) would need to be felled for safety reasons. The access road and

¹ The 2003 Restoration Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice #4 (April 2005) approved the placement Robinhood Large Woody Debris project. The project is designed to reintroduce the missing large wood component back to the ecosystem, accompanied by riparian thinning and planting to improve the health, diversity, and resiliency of the floodplain and riparian area. The Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice are available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects/>.



landing may have to be bladed to ensure easy access by log truck. A 30-foot no disturbance vegetation buffer would be designated along the intermittent tributary east of the log deck site. Total ground disturbance at the landing site, including the access road, would be approximately 3 acres. The proposed project is located in the Upper East Fork Hood River sixth field watershed with all logs being flown into the Robinhood Creek seventh field watershed.

A heavy lift helicopter would transport the logs across the East Fork Hood River and place them at designated locations along the lower 0.7 miles of Robinhood Creek. Once the logs are placed, the access road and landing would be scarified if needed to minimize soil sedimentation, planted with native grass and/or conifers, and the road closed to vehicle access. Nottingham Campground and the preferred refueling location, Little John Snopark (across Highway 35), would be closed during implementation. A second refueling site is Hood River Meadows parking lot; the parking lot would be closed during implementation, if it is used.

Decision to be Made: The Hood River District Ranger will decide whether building the log deck and reopening the closed road should be authorized within Upper East Fork Hood River sixth field watershed on the Hood River Ranger District. Building the log deck will be analyzed under a categorical exclusion, category 7: "Modification or maintenance of stream or lake aquatic habitat improvement structures using native materials or normal practices" (FSH 1909.15-2007-1, 31.2, 2/15/07). Reopening the road will be analyzed under category 4: "Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries" (FSH 1909.15-2007-1, 31.1, 2/15/07). The analysis for this project will be undertaken by an interdisciplinary team and documented in a project file. If it is determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist (see FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30.3), the proposed project may be documented in a Decision Memo.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal, please bring them to our attention **by May 23, 2008**. Send comments to Gary Asbridge, 6780 Highway 35; Mt. Hood/Parkdale, OR 97041. For more information, you may contact Gary Asbridge at (541) 352-6002 or gasbridge@fs.fed.us. Electronic comments may also be submitted to comments-pacificnorthwest-mthood-hoodriver@fs.fed.us in a format such as an e-mail message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc).

Sincerely,

/s/ Daina L. Bambe

DAINA L. BAMBE
District Ranger

Enclosures