

DECISION MEMO

Tower Rock Thin

USDA Forest Service, Region 6, Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Cowlitz Valley Ranger District
Lewis County, Washington
T11N, R8E, S. 18 & 19; T11N, R7E, S. 13 Willamette Meridian, Unsurveyed

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Sixty-three acres of Late-Successional Reserve are proposed for commercial thinning on the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District. The proposed project, Tower Rock Thin, would occur in a stand of 72 year old Douglas-fir and western hemlock.

Tower Rock Thin is located 8 miles southeast of Randle, Washington, along Forest Road 7600.075, in T11N, R8E, Section 18, Willamette Meridian, in Lewis County, Washington. The proposed activity is located in the Lower Cispus Watershed, and within lands allocated as Late-Successional Reserve by the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (1990) as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* [(1994), also known as the Northwest Forest Plan]. The objective of Late-Successional Reserves is to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems, which serve as habitat for late-successional and old growth related species, including the northern spotted owl. This portion of the watershed has also been designated a Tier 2 Key Watershed, under the Northwest Forest Plan. Key watersheds contribute directly to conservation of at-risk, anadromous fish populations.

The purpose of the proposed restoration thinning is to:

Accelerate the development of late-successional forest characteristics, such as vertical and horizontal diversity, canopy layering, development of large trees, and features such as “defective” trees or trees with dead tops, while minimizing short-term adverse effects from canopy cover reduction, ground disturbance, and loss of existing habitat features such as existing down trees from logging-related damage.

In addition there is a need to:

- A) Increase the number of snags (dead trees) and the amount of coarse woody debris (down trees, limbs and bark) on site, both of which are currently in short supply, particularly hard snags and sound pieces of down wood.
- B) Release overtopped bigleaf maple trees through thinning, and/or snag and down wood creation to retain these trees as part of the future stand. Bigleaf maple enhancement will improve long-term habitat conditions for a variety of species, including sensitive mollusks such as the snail *Cryptomastix devia*, salamanders, arthropods, and neotropical birds.

- C) Maintain or improve riparian reserve habitat conditions along Covell Creek and its tributary.
- D) Improve long-term cover conditions for deer and elk (winter range) by increasing tree and limb size, while minimizing short-term adverse effects from reduction in canopy cover and loss of existing hemlock understory regeneration (canopy layering).

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action consists of commercially thinning a 72 year old, 63 acre stand of Douglas-fir and western hemlock, which was previously thinned in 1988. Ground-based logging systems will be utilized to harvest the stand. The stand would be treated using a variable density thinning from below, using “skips” and “gaps”. The stand would be commercially thinned by removing 10 trees per acre ranging in size from 10 to 24 inches in diameter, so that a minimum canopy closure of 60% is maintained. The target relative density following treatment is 30-35, based on trees above seven inches in diameter.

In order to increase diversity within the stand, four small “gaps” (1/4 acre) would be created, where a wider thinning spacing would occur. To maintain late-successional features identified within the stand, three areas of high snag and down wood densities totaling nine acres would be excluded from thinning. These “skips” will serve to protect and retain concentrations of existing habitat features such as snags and coarse woody material, an identified sensitive mollusk site, and two legacy, old-growth trees. They would also serve to provide canopy heterogeneity in the stand.

No new road development would occur, as the area is currently accessible. Existing skid trails will be utilized for log removal, and then sub-soiled as described in the mitigation measures.

The following mitigation and/or enhancement projects are also proposed, and are listed in priority order. These projects would be implemented following the sale using various sources of funding as available:

1. Create an average of six snags per acre following harvest.
2. Fall 5.8 trees per acre to meet down wood goals.
3. Eradicate noxious weeds using hand-pulling, or other approved methods, that may establish themselves within the sale area, based on needs identified during a post-sale weed survey.
4. Fall hazard trees adjacent to the Cispus Center trail that borders the unit near Covell Creek.
5. Plant approximately 400 western red cedar seedlings in and around gaps, and root rot pockets within the stand. Seedlings will be protected with Vexar tubing, and if needed spray applications of non-toxic, biodegradable anti-browsing repellent will be applied for up to two years, to protect seedlings from big game foraging.
6. Restore the spur road crossing located at the east end of the unit boundary. The project will restore the stream to its predicted natural bankfull width, and reduce risk to future failure. To accomplish this, material sloughed into the channel will be excavated to

resume the width to approximately 6.0 feet. Excavated material will be used to rebuild the bank height to 2.0 feet.

7. Retain 25 pieces of large wood from the Tower Rock Thin timber sale area for Lower Cispus watershed restoration purposes as described in the Lower Cispus Watershed Analysis (USDA 1996, 2003b). This wood should be a minimum of 70 feet long, a minimum of 18 inches (dbh) and with rootwad attached, where possible. The large wood will be utilized to meet the planning objectives of Stream Restoration Projects in high risk areas identified in the Lower Cispus 5th field (USDA 2004), and would be consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (USDA 1994). Wood shall be obtained without reopening skid roads or decreasing canopy closure below 60%. All timing restrictions and mitigation measures shall be complied with, as described in project specialist reports, and this document.

THE DECISION

I have decided to implement the proposed action to thin the conifers in this 63 acre stand, as described above. This decision includes the required mitigation measures detailed below. Implementing the proposed action will meet the purpose of and need for this action.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The following required mitigation measures were developed and included as part of this decision. Activities will comply with provisions described in the Memorandum of Agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology (MOA), and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (R-3, WDFW MOU).

Wildlife Mitigation Measures

- 1) No project activities will occur in the period between December 1 to April 1, to limit disturbance to wintering deer and elk. Due to the existing winter range road closure on FR 7600.075, no waivers or alterations of this restriction will be given due to low snow levels, or other weather-related factors.
- 2) Existing, large, coarse woody debris and large, remnant snags will be protected from disturbance to the extent feasible by placing unthinned patches around them, or otherwise avoiding these sites during yarding.
- 3) Protect sensitive mollusk sites by limiting disturbance within 50 feet of the known *Cryptomastix devia* mollusk site, or by including it in a larger, unthinned “skip” patch. Where feasible, “release” suppressed bigleaf maples by falling competing conifers within 50 feet of the maples. Fallen conifers or conifer logs within 30 feet of the maple trees should be left for coarse woody material; trees farther than this distance can be removed if they can be yarded away from the maples without causing damage to the trees.

- 4) Create an average of six snags per acres following harvest with post-sale funding to meet Forest-wide LSR guidelines. At least three of these snags should be above 20 inches in diameter, and all created snags will exceed 17 inches in diameter.
- 5) Fall 5.8 trees per acre for down wood following thinning operations, based on desired levels in the GPNF Forestwide Late-successional Reserve Assessment for commercial thinning in the western hemlock zone.

Aquatics Mitigation Measures

- 1) Develop contract specifications to minimize the impacts of soil displacement, compaction and risk of sediment entering the stream channel. Operation of heavy equipment and log trucks will be restricted on non-system roads to periods during the dry season (June 1 – Oct 1). Exceptions to this timing restriction may be granted should the aquatics specialist determine soil moisture conditions permit ground based operation.
- 2) Rehabilitate areas compacted during management activities, and accelerate recovery of compacted soils on temporary and system roads to minimize the amount of sediment reaching streams and riparian areas, and to accelerate the re-vegetation process,. Contractual agreement will be written to stabilize identified system roads within the sale area boundary (see Table 1). This project will use sub-soiling or similar methods to treat compacted areas such as skid roads and landings, and plant native vegetation to restore areas used for access by equipment. Sub-soiling should break up soil through the compacted layer (typically 12-18 inches deep).

Table 1. Summary of temporary roads/landings and system roads included in subsoil and erosion control treatment in the Tower Rock Thin planning area. Lewis County, Washington.

Site ID	Road Mile		T-R-S	Fund Source*	Comments
	Start	Stop			
Skid roads /landings	0.0	0.1	11 N-8 E-18	Contract Spec	All temp roads and landings
FR 7600075	0.0	1.8	11 N-8 E-21	Contract Spec	Stablize by installing cross drains.
KV = Knutson-Vandenberg Contract Spec = Contractual specification					

- 3) Utilize contract specifications to minimize the effects to fish and other aquatic organisms in accordance with Washington State Laws (WAC 220-110-070). Proposed actions should conform to provisions of the USDA Forest Service – Washington State Memorandum of Understanding.
- 4) Utilize contract specification restricting heavy equipment operation within the inner 2/3 of the riparian reserve (i.e. Covell Creek = 295 feet; unnamed tributary to Covell Creek = 145 feet). Any channels identified during ground reconnaissance should be marked and protected with interim riparian reserves buffers. Deviations from this measure should

involve consultation with the aquatic resource specialist and documentation in daily diaries.

- 5) The Tower Rock Thin will avoid wet and/or potentially unstable soils as mapped by the Forest Soil Scientist. The current stands will be retained to maximize structural development and plant species diversity to benefit soil stability, water quality and old growth dependent fauna including native salmonids.

Soils Mitigation Measures

- 1) Ground-based machinery will not operate where soil water content is high enough to cause rutting that exceeds 6 inches in depth for a length of ten feet or more. Deviations from this measure should involve consultation with the appropriate resource specialist and documentation in daily diaries. This measure will limit the degree of soil compaction, rutting, and puddling as well as reduce the potential for offsite stream sedimentation.
- 2) Skid trails will be pre-designated for all ground-based equipment operations, and will be spaced a minimum of 150 feet apart. Existing roads or skid trails must be used if possible rather than creating new skid trails. Timber will be felled to lead to the skid trail locations. Ground based equipment will remain on skid trails. Equipment operating off designated skid trails must operate over slash beds that are as thick and continuous as practicable. The objective of this measure is to limit the area, extent, and the degree of soil damage, displacement, and disturbance.
- 3) Rock will be used only when necessary to reduce erosion, puddling and compaction on landings and Forest Road 7600.075, and applied only where needed (“spot rocking”).
- 4) Skid trails and landings will be sub-soiled to a minimum depth of 18 inches immediately following treatment. Proposed alternatives to sub-soiling must be approved by a qualified earth scientist in consultation with the sale administrator and documented in the daily diary. Ground-based equipment will not be operated on sub-soiled portions of roads and landings. Available logging debris will be placed across the sub-soiled roads and landing surfaces to maintain organic matter levels. Sub-soiled landings and roads would be seeded with local native grasses and covered with weed-free straw or bark mulch, or slash where it is available. Acceptable grass seed mixture, the type of mulch, and their application rates, will be specified by the district botanist or aquatics specialist. Subsequent vehicular access to these areas will be prevented. The objective of this measure is to rehabilitate areas compacted during logging activities, accelerate recovery of compacted soils, and facilitate water infiltration and revegetation on those disturbed areas. Closure to vehicles is required to prevent these areas from being re-compacted and to allow vegetation to develop.

Botany Mitigation Measures

- 1) To prevent the introduction of noxious weeds into the project area, all heavy equipment, or other off-road equipment used in the project is to be cleaned to remove soil, seeds,

vegetative matter, or other debris that could contain seeds. Cleaning will be done prior to entering National Forest Lands, and when equipment moves from or between project sites, or areas known to be infested with noxious weeds, or otherwise. Cleaning of the equipment may include pressure washing. An inspection will be required to ensure that equipment is clean before work can begin.

- 2) If soil disturbance occurs, revegetate site with appropriate, locally collected native seed or native plants. When seed is used, it should be certified noxious weed free or from Forest Service native seed supplies.
- 3) Protect soil from compaction by applying bark chips or straw mulch. If straw mulch is used, it should be certified weed free. Mulch species preferably will come from native seed sources, annual rye, or cereal grain fields.
- 4) Gravel or imported soil is a potential source of noxious or invasive weeds. The gravel or soil sources will be approved by the sale administrator, in consultation with the Zone Botanist or District Invasive Weed Coordinator, who will monitor and document sites and prepare weed eradication programs if necessary. Use clean gravel or soil sources if they are available.
- 5) Eradicate noxious weeds using hand-pulling, or other approved methods, that may establish themselves within the sale area, based on needs identified during a post-sale weed survey.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment pursuant to FSH 1909.15, Chapter 31.2, which “establishes categorical exclusions for limited timber harvest activities of live trees to maintain forest health and improve stand conditions.” Category 12 of this policy allows the “Harvest of live trees not to exceed 70 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction...” “The proposed action may include incidental removal of trees for landings, skid trails, and road clearing [including the] commercial thinning of overstocked stands to achieve the desired stocking level to increase health and vigor.”

Furthermore, the categorical exclusion is appropriate to this proposed action because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects, which may significantly affect the human environment. This action does not establish a precedent for future actions. The decision is for a site-specific project using known silvicultural treatments. The cumulative effects of this action were considered, and this action, along with other actions (federal and private) will not result in significant impacts. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the Record.

The following resource conditions have been considered in determining whether impacts related to the proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or an EIS:

1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.

The Endangered Species Act requires that federal activities do not jeopardize the continued existence of any species federally listed or proposed as threatened or endangered, or result in adverse modification to such species' designated critical habitat.

Fisheries: Potential effects to federally listed fish species and designated critical habitats were reviewed in the Biological Assessment for USDA Programmatic Activities. The Biological Assessment determined that the proposed project would have “no effect” to Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive species or their habitats including Lower Columbia River steelhead, Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon, Columbia River/Southwest Washington coho salmon, Lower Columbia River chum salmon, or Lower Columbia River bull trout, due to the lack of suitable habitat within the planning area and because no individual Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive species have been found within in the planning area based on stream surveys. The proposed action will have “no effect” to designated critical habitat. This activity will have “no effect” to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the Lower Cowlitz River for Lower Columbia River/Southwest Washington coho salmon and Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon.

This project is consistent with the *Biological Assessment for USDA Forest Service Programmatic Activities Affecting Columbia River and Coastal-Puget Sound Bull Trout, etc.* (December 2003) and the USDA Fish and Wildlife Service's letter of continuing concurrence for programmatic actions on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, dated February 10, 2004. The project area is outside of the “Bull Trout Consultation Area” prescribed by the Level I Team and there is “no effect” to all projects in the Lower Cispus watershed.

Wildlife: The project is considered to be non-suitable spotted owl “dispersal habitat”, based on the scarcity of suitable habitat components such as snags and down wood. This is partially due to previous thinning in the stand, and the lack of post-sale snag creation or falling of trees for down wood. The project falls within the scope of the “Programmatic Biological Assessment for Forest Management, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, August 2001”. The project does not occur in a designated spotted owl Critical Habitat Unit (CHU); CHU WA-38 borders the western edge of the unit, but no project acres occur within. The consistency form prepared for this project documents a determination of “no effect” for the gray wolf, grizzly bear, northern bald eagle, marbled murrelet, northern spotted owl critical habitat, marbled murrelet critical habitat”, and a “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” determination for the northern spotted owl due to short-term degradation of dispersal habitat conditions. The project is expected to improve long-term habitat conditions for the northern spotted owl, and other late-successional forest species.

Based on the protection afforded to the known site for the Puget Oregonian snail, (*Cryptomastix devia*), and adjacent suitable habitat, and the enhancement of future habitat conditions for the for Sensitive mollusks and other organisms, the determination in the

wildlife Biological Evaluation is that the proposed project would have a “beneficial impact” to the Sensitive-listed Puget Oregonian snail, and “no impact” to the blue-gray tail-dropper (*Prophyaon coeruleum*) or the Malone jumping-slug (*Hemphillia malonei*), both of which are also U.S. Forest Service, Region 6, Sensitive species. These species were not located during the project mollusk survey, and assumed to be absent from the Tower Rock Thin stand.

Due to the very low likelihood that individual Townsend’s big-eared bats (another Sensitive animal species) would be affected by the project, the determination is that the project “may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing, or cause a loss of viability to the population or species”. The small size of the Tower Rock Thin project, combined with the restriction of activities during the winter months (i.e. most probable season of occurrence), and the very low likelihood that the Sensitive, wide-ranging California wolverine would occur in this area, result in a determination that the Tower Rock Thin project will have “no impact” to the California wolverine.

Plants: A botanical evaluation of the project sites has been completed for Region 6 sensitive plant species that may occur on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. No threatened and endangered plant species are known to occur on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. One federally threatened species (*Howellia aquatilis*) is suspected to occur on the Forest, but it is found in palustrine, emergent wetlands, a habitat not associated with the project, therefore a determination of “no effect” has been made for this federally listed species. Based upon the pre-field review and project field survey, the determination is that the implementation of this project will have “no impact” to five Sensitive plant species, and “may impact individuals, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing, or cause a loss of viability to the population or species” to an additional 14 fungi and one lichen species, for which surveys are not presently feasible.

Survey standards for wildlife and botanical species are in compliance with *The Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines* (January 2001).

2. Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds

Floodplains: Executive Order 11988 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains.

The project is not located in or near floodplains. This has been validated by site-review. This decision will not affect floodplains.

Wetlands: Executive Order 11990 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with destruction or modification of wetlands.

The project is located near a wetland. This has been validated by site-review. Forest Road 7600.075 passes through a wetland. The project will be designed to confine road-related impacts to the road prism. I have determined that there would be no adverse impacts related to the modification or destruction of wetlands.

Municipal Watersheds: Municipal watersheds are managed under multiple use prescriptions in land and resource management plans.

The project is located 45 miles from the nearest municipal watershed. This decision will not result in municipal watershed-related impacts.

3. Congressionally Designated Areas

Wilderness: This decision does not affect Wilderness. The project does not occur in or near Wilderness. Goat Rocks Wilderness Area, the closest Wilderness, is 15 miles east of the project.

Wilderness Study Areas: There are no Wilderness Study Areas on the Forest. This decision will not affect Wilderness Study Areas.

National Recreation Areas: There are no National Recreation Areas on the Forest. This decision will not affect National Recreation Areas.

National Monument: The project is located 11 miles east of Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. This decision will not affect the National Volcanic Monument.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers on the Cowlitz Valley District. The project is located within 0.75 miles of the Cispus River, which has been recommended for Recreation status and will be managed to retain Wild and Scenic River values, per the Forest Plan. This decision will maintain Wild and Scenic River values for the Cispus River.

4. Inventoried Roadless Areas

There are no inventoried roadless areas (RARE II or Forest Plan) in the decision area (Plan FEIS, p. II-53, IV-106; Record of Decision, p. ROD-13). This decision will not affect inventoried roadless areas.

5. Research Natural Areas

There are no Research Natural Areas in the decision area (Plan FEIS, p. II-104). The closest Research Natural Area, Butter Creek Research Natural Area, is approximately 20 miles north of the project. This decision, with impacts limited to the immediate area of activity, will not affect Research Natural Areas.

6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites

There are no American Indian and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites.

7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas

Surveys were conducted for Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties or areas that may be affected by this decision. A 'no properties affected' determination was made. There are no archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas.

8. Soils

In addition to the above resource conditions and reports prepared for this analysis, a site-specific analysis by a qualified soils scientist revealed that a very limited amount of short-term, locally concentrated losses in soil quality would occur due to additional compaction and displacement. Additional soil damage is expected to be minor with Best Management Practices, mitigation measures, and prescribed logging system design. Since the extent of detrimental soil conditions will not increase, no net loss in soil productivity is expected. Based on the best available information, the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines are believed to be adequate to protect the soil resource.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement included listing the proposal in Pinchot Projects, the Forest's Schedule of Proposed Actions, in March, 2005, as well as sending a scoping letter to the individuals or groups on the Cowlitz Valley project planning mailing list. A letter describing the proposed action, analysis and mitigations was sent to a mailing list of 42 individuals, organizations, agencies and tribes for a 30 day comment period in December, 2005. Field visits were conducted to the site for two individuals that requested them. Written or e-mail comments related to this decision were received from Gifford Pinchot Task Force/Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, Marty Fortin of the Cispus Learning Center, and Susan Jane Brown. This decision is not highly controversial. The following agency individuals were contacted, and involved with project planning:

Steve Freitas, North Zone Planning Team, Heritage Resource Specialist
Joe Hiss, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Biologist
Ken Wieman, North Planning Team, Supervisory Fisheries Biologist
Tom Kogut, North Zone Planning Team, Wildlife Biologist, Team Leader
Marie Tompkins, North Zone Planning Team, Hydrologist
Aldo Aguilar, Soil Scientist, Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Karen Thompson, North Zone Planning Team Leader
Burtchell Thomas, Botanist Detailer, Willamette National Forest
Carol Chandler, Forest Wildlife/Botany Program Manager

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY AND/OR RELATED TO OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

I find that this decision is consistent with the as required by the National Forest Management Act. The project was designed in conformance with forest plan standards and guidelines for the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan. The proposed action is also based on the recommendations of the 1997 Gifford Pinchot National Forest Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (pp. 5-6 – 5-10). I find that there will be no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources from implementation of this project.

I find that this action is consistent with the Endangered Species Act of 1973. For Threatened and Endangered terrestrial species, this action and the likely effects to species and their habitat are consistent with commercial thinning projects that were analyzed in the Programmatic Biological Assessment for Forest Management (August 2001). Additional consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for terrestrial species is not required. For Threatened and Endangered aquatic species, it is determined that this project will have **no effect**, therefore informal consultation with NOAA Fisheries or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required. This project **may impact individuals or habitat/not likely contribute to a trend towards Federal listing or loss of viability to individual or species** for plant and animal species that are listed on the R6 Regional Forester's sensitive species list.

I find that this action is consistent with the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267) (which amended the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act). Because Essential Fish Habitat will not be adversely affected for any of these species, no consultation is necessary.

I find that all applicable state and federal requirements associated with the Clean Water Act (CWA) will be met through planning, application, and monitoring of BMP's in conformance with the CWA and Federal guidance and management direction.

There are no impacts to resources of cultural or historical significance therefore I find that this action is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act.

I find that this action does not violate other Federal, State, or local laws designed for the protection of the environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL

This proposal is subject to appeal pursuant to the September 16, 2005, order issued by the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS. Those who provide timely and substantive comments will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

Appeal of this decision must be in writing and fully consistent with the content requirements described in 36 CFR 215.14. The Appeal Deciding Officer is Claire Lavendel, Gifford Pinchot

National Forest Supervisor. An appeal should be addressed to the Forest Supervisor at any of the following addresses: Postal and street location for hand delivery: ATTN.: 1570 APPEALS, 10600 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver, WA 98682 (office hours: 8:00 – 4:30 M – F); fax: (360) 891-5010; or email: appeals-pacificnorthwest-giffordpinchot@fs.fed.us.

The Appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the date of the legal notice of this decision was published in *The Chronicle*, Centralia, Washington.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

In accordance with 40 CFR 215.10, if the decision is appealed, this action will not be implemented before the 16th day following appeal disposition. If no appeal is filed, the action may be implemented no sooner than the 5th day following the close of the appeal filing period.

CONTACT

Further information about this decision can be obtained from Karen Thompson, Planning Team Leader, during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District office (Address: P.O. Box 670, Randle, WA 98377; Phone: voice (360) 497-1136, TDD (360) 497-1101 (hearing impaired); Fax: (360) 497-1102; e-mail: karenmthompson@fs.fed.us).

SIGNATURE AND DATE

/s/ Kristie L. Miller

KRISTIE L. MILLER
District Ranger

2/13/2006

Date

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