

**Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant impact:
Middle Wind River Riparian Enhancement Project**

Decision Notice & Finding of No Significant Impact

Middle Wind River Riparian Enhancement Project

Middle Wind River
Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Hollis Property
Skamania County, Washington
T. 4 N., R. 7 E., Section 9, Willamette Meridian

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Background

The Underwood Conservation District (UCD) proposes to restore instream conditions and steelhead habitat on one reach of the Wind River, located immediately south of Beaver Campground. The project would consist of installing streambank log structures along an approximate 1-mile reach of the Wind River, north of Stabler. This project is federally funded through Title II of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (P.L. 106-393, 2000). The project is designed to restore instream conditions, bank stability, and riparian habitat for the recovery of threatened Lower Columbia steelhead along the Wind River, north of Stabler, Washington

The environmental analysis (EA) for this project was completed in March 2007 and identified resource needs (EA, page 4) and management objectives (EA, page 4) for this project that are intended to move the area closer toward the desired future conditions of the landscape, as identified in the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (LRMP), as amended, and actions recommended in the *Wind River Watershed Analysis* identified as necessary to attain the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

The Middle Wind River Restoration planning area is located about ten miles north of Stabler, Washington. The planning area is in the Wind River watershed, and includes approximately 23 work sites on approximately 5 acres.

The environmental assessment documents the analysis of one alternative to meet this need and the “no action” alternative.

Decision

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 2, the proposed action, with modifications.

Implementation of this alternative will result in the installation of approximately 23 log and rock structures in the banks of the Wind River, and small side channels. Approximately 200 logs will be used in the design. Existing roads will be utilized for machinery access to streamside worksites.

Following installation of the log structures, temporary roads and skid trails utilized in the project will be closed and decommissioned. Disturbed areas around the work sites will be seeded and planted with conifers and hardwoods.

This decision includes the adoption of all of the project design criteria as listed in the EA, pages 11-13. The project design criteria and mitigation measures can be found in Attachment 1 of this Decision Notice.

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Clarification and Correction of EA:

The project will be implemented on both public (National Forest) and private lands. Approximately 75% of the disturbance will be on National Forest lands, including 16 of the 23 work sites, all decking areas, and 90% of the skid trails (Figure 1).

Beaver Campground will not be used as a staging area, this was incorrectly stated in the EA. Staging and decking areas will be limited to the project area, as are indicated on the project map.

Site restoration, control of noxious weeds, and monitoring of weeds will be accomplished by the Underwood Conservation District, using Title II funds, following completion of structure installation.

The term “road” is incorrectly used in the EA to refer to existing access on the project site. There are no designed roads on the project area. Access to this formerly private land has been by existing wheel tracks/skid trails used for past logging and other river access.

Discussion of cumulative effects does not mention the planned removal of Hemlock Dam, or the Trout Creek restoration project. Both of these projects are within the same 5th field watershed (Wind River) but effects are concentrated along Trout Creek or the mainstem of the Wind River. The magnitude of the proposed action is such that downstream effects would be limited. The proposed action provides fish habitat improvement upstream of the confluence of the Wind River and Trout Creek.

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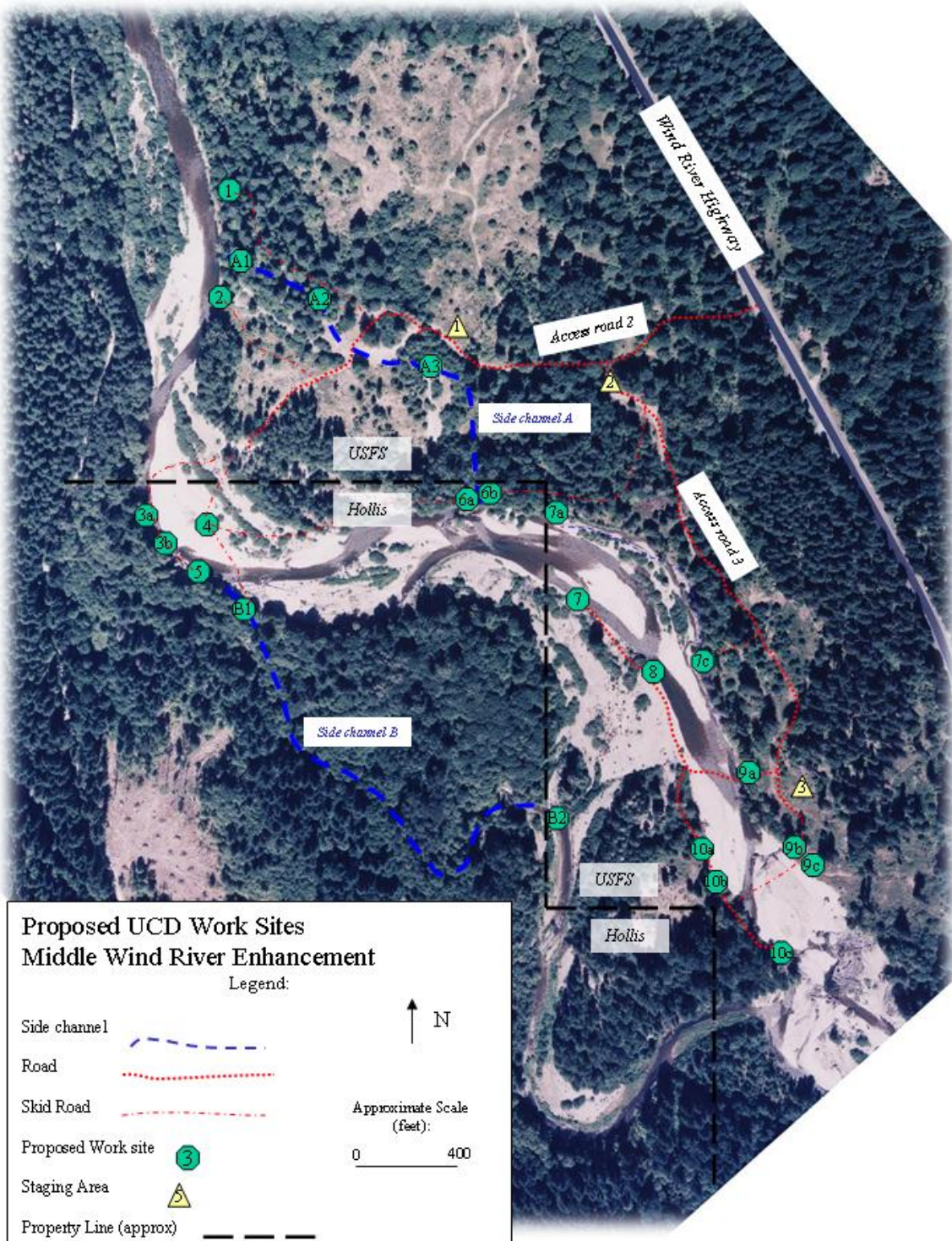


Figure 1. Selected Alternative.

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When compared to the no action alternative this alternative, as modified, meets the purpose of and need for action and provides addresses some of the road-related effects. This alternative brings conditions closer to the desired future condition (DFC) as defined by the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan*, as amended (LRMP) and adopts recommendations found in the *Wind River Watershed Analysis*.

Rationale for the Decision

Alternative 2, as modified, will restore channel and bank stability by securing log structures to stream banks and/or gravel bars, reducing sedimentation and reducing the stream's width/depth ratio, in order to improve habitat for Lower Columbia River Steelhead, a threatened species. The structures would add habitat diversity to the mainstem Wind River and to important side channels.

Structures 1, 2, A1, A2, A3, 6a and 6b would help to protect and enhance side channel A. This channel is important as an active channel during high flows, helping store and move some of the river's floodwaters, and providing fish high water refuge habitat. The structures would add habitat diversity to the side channels, which have little large wood in them. The structures would also serve to capture some of the stream's energy during floods and high flows, lessening the chance that the Wind River would change its course, making the side channel the main stream.

Structures B1 and B2 would help to protect and enhance side channel B in a similar manner. Structures A1, A2, 3a, 3b, 5, 6a, 6b, 7, 7a, 9a, 9b, 9c, 10a, 10b, and 10c will help to minimize erosion on adjacent banks, and help to keep the mainstem channel narrow and deep during summer, thus keeping the river cooler. These structures would also provide fish habitat for resting, shade, and cover. Structures would be designed to add in-stream roughness (logs), which would help to decrease bank erosion, yet use the stream's energy in place, and not transfer it downstream to other sites. See Appendix A for map of proposed worksites.

All structures would help to stabilize the location of the main river channel and side channels, while still keeping the river in connection with its floodplain. This would enable managers to invest in other riparian improvements, such as conifer plantings and weed removal, lessening the chance that those investments would be lost in the next flood.

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered Alternative 1, the no action alternative. A comparison of the alternatives can be found in the EA on page 10.

Alternative 1 was not selected since it would not correct stream channel conditions or habitat for Threatened fish species. Selecting Alternative 1 would not bring conditions closer to the DFC as defined by the LRMP.

Public Involvement

This project was initiated in 2005 and was first listed in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Spring 2005 Schedule of Proposed Actions. An initial scoping letter, dated June 29, 2006, was sent to interested individuals, groups, and agencies. The scoping letters for this project were also sent to the Yakama Indian Nation. The project was also discussed at a public meeting of the Wind River Watershed Council in Carson, WA on April 19, 2006. Copies of scoping notices and comment letters are in the analysis file.

During the initial scoping period, no comment letters were received in response to the proposed action.

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The interdisciplinary team identified several issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. No significant issues were identified. The following issues were identified:

- Issue 1 – Threatened and Endangered Species, and Survey & Manage Species (EA, page 6).
- Issue 2 – Water quality impacts from project implementation (EA, page 6).
- Issue 3 – The effects of the project on the Wind River’s suitability for listing as a Scenic River (EA, page 6).
- Issue 4 – Potential downstream effects on private property (EA, page 7).
- Issue 5 – Noxious weeds (EA, page 7).

No significant issues were raised, thus the proposed action and the no action alternative were the only two alternatives considered.

A legal notice announcing the availability of the Middle Wind River Riparian Enhancement Project Environmental Assessment for review and comment was published in the *Columbian* newspaper (newspaper of record) on April 3, 2007. The 30-day comment period ended on May 3, 2007. Two organizations submitted written comments within the comment period. Copies of these letters are in the Middle Wind River Riparian Enhancement Project analysis file. Substantive comments received are summarized along with Forest Service responses in Attachment 2 of this document. I have considered these comments when making the decision to implement a modified Alternative 2.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant affect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. I find there will be no significant affects to public health and safety. Project work will occur in an area that is only infrequently used by the public.
3. I find there will be no significant effects to unique characteristics or ecologically critical areas, including historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, rangelands, wetlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers. There are no park lands, farmlands, or rangelands within the project area. There are no heritage resource sites located within the planning area. There will be no impact to wetlands due to the implementation of project design criteria and mitigation measures (EA, pages 11-13). The LRMP recognizes the potential for the segment of the Wind River to be eligible for “Scenic” classification. The LRMP requires that these areas be managed in a manner that would maintain their eligibility for Wild and Scenic River status. The proposed project will enhance fishery habitat; the Wind River fishery is listed as one of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values that make the river eligible for consideration.
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. There is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project. The comments to the EA indicate that this project is not considered to be controversial (Analysis File, Comments to the EA).

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5. Through implementation of streamside zone management on the Mt. Adams Ranger District, the Forest Service has considerable local experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The project was designed by an Underwood Conservation District Engineer licensed in the State of Washington, with consultation from an experienced US Forest Service Fisheries Biologist. Thus, I have determined that the effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk.
6. I find that this action is one of several similar actions undertaken on national forest lands and is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represent a decision in principle. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is one of numerous administrative units of the Forest Service that have previously undertaken this type of action.
7. Cumulative impacts are addressed by issue in Chapter III of the EA. I find that this action along with other past, present and foreseeable future actions on both public and private lands would not result in cumulatively significant impacts.
8. I find that the action will have no significant adverse affect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no such properties in the project area and none that would be affected by the action.
9. I find the action is consistent with the Enangered Species Act of 1973. Forest Service Fish Biologists have determined that the action may affect and is likely adversely affect Lower Columbia River (LCR) Steelhead and LCR Chinook within the project area and may affect, but not likely adversely affect LCR Coho, Snake River Spring, Summer, and Fall Chinook; Upper Columbia River Chinook; Snake River, Upper Columbia River, or Middle Columbia River steelhead, Snake River Sockeye, Columbia River Chum, Bull Trout or designated critical habitat. Formal consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service has taken place and a Biological Opinion was issued in October 2006 (*Middle Wind River Riparian Enhancement Project Endangered Species Act - Section 7 Consultation Fisheries Biological Evaluation & Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation*, October 19, 2006.) All construction activities will follow the conservation recommendations to avoid, minimize, or otherwise offset affects to aquatic resources described in the Biological Opinion. The conservation recommendations have been incorporated into the project design criteria.

I find that there is no effect on Threatened or Endangered terrestrial species, based on the project Wildlife Biological Evaluation (Analysis File, Appendix B). The project may impact individuals of a Sensitive species, the Puget Oregonian (*Chrystomastix devia*), but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species (Wildlife Biological Evaluation, Project Analysis file, Appendix B).

10. 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.
11. 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 Best Management Practices in conformance with the CWA and Federal guidance and management direction.
12. I find that this action will not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority and/or low-income communities, pursuant to E.O. 12898. No issues were raised that

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indicated that there would be any effect to minority and/or low income communities from the proposed action.

13. I find that the action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (EA, pages 131 to 132). The action is consistent with the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* as amended.

Finding of Consistency with the National Forest Management Act of 1976

As required by the National Forest Management Act, this decision is consistent with the *Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (1990) as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (1994), *Amendments to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (2001) (LRMP), I find that there will be no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources from the project.

This decision is based on the following additional factors to assure consistency with the National Forest Management Act of 1976:

This action is best suited to the goals in the LRMP. The applicable goals with respect to the LRMP and the *Wind River Watershed Analysis* are stated in the EA on pages 3 and 4. This decision is responsive to those goals and is best suited to meet those goals.

Lands can be adequately restocked within five years after final harvest when trees are cut to achieve timber production.

Restocking is not applicable; tree harvest is not part of this project, and current tree stocking will not be materially changed. Riparian tree planting will be accomplished following installation of instream structures.

This decision is not based on the greatest dollar return or the greatest output of timber (although these factors shall be considered). This decision was based on a variety of reasons. It was not primarily chosen for its expected economic benefit (EA, page 30). Economics was only one of the many factors considered.

Potential effects on residual trees and adjacent stands have been considered. The effects on residual trees and adjacent stands were considered in development of the LRMP. The decision, including adherence to applicable LRMP Standards and Guidelines and the Project Design Criteria, is designed to provide the desired effects of management practices on the resource values. This decision is consistent with the LRMP and provides the desired effect on residual trees and adjacent stands.

This action was selected to avoid permanent impairment of site productivity and to ensure conservation of soil and water resources. This decision avoids impairment of site productivity. The nature of the decision and use of Best Management Practices, Project Design Criteria, and the Mitigation Measures will protect soil and water resources.

This action was selected to provide the desired effects on water quality and quantity, wildlife and fish habitat, regeneration of desired tree species, forage production, recreation users, aesthetic values, and other resource yields. The decision, including adherence to applicable LRMP Standards and Guidelines, Best Management Practices, Project Design Criteria, and the Mitigation Measures is designed to provide

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the desired effects of management practices on the resource values. This decision is consistent with the LRMP and provides the desired effect on the above resources.

This action is practical in terms of transportation and harvesting requirements and total costs of preparation, logging, and administration. The project area has adequate access, no new permanent roads are necessary to implement this decision. The treatment in this decision is appropriate to accomplish project objectives, and is economically practical.

I find that this action is consistent with the *Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation* (USDA, 1988b) as amended by the *Amendment to the 1988 Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation* (USDA, 1992). Project design criteria are included by this decision to prevent or control the spread of noxious weeds within the project area.

I find that this action will not prevent attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives, as defined 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* (1994, pp. B-9 through B-11):

1. *Maintain and restore the distribution, diversity, and complexity of watershed and landscape scale features to ensure protection of the aquatic systems to which species, populations and communities are uniquely adapted.* The purpose and need for this project are to restore instream conditions, bank stability, and riparian habitat (EA p. 1).
2. *Maintain and restore temporal connectivity within and between watersheds...* This project will maintain or restore temporal connectivity between watersheds. There will be no disruption to refugia. This project “may impact” the terrestrial snail Puget Oregonian, a Sensitive species. Design Criterion #5 has been incorporated to prevent damage to host bigleaf maple trees (EA, p. 27). Two side channels will be reconnected to the mainstem and thereby restore aquatic habitat connectivity (EA, p. 21).
3. *Maintain and restore the physical integrity of the aquatic system, including shorelines, banks, and bottom conditions.* The purpose and need for this project are to restore instream conditions, bank stability, and riparian habitat (EA p. 1).
4. *Maintain and restore water quality necessary to support healthy riparian, aquatic, and wetland ecosystems...* Design Criteria # 2, 3, 4, and 6 are intended to maintain water quality during project implementation. The long term effect of this action is expected to contribute to an improvement in riparian habitat conditions, including water quality (EA pp. 16 – 18).
5. *Maintain and restore the sediment regime under which ecosystems evolved.* Short-term impacts from implementation include the generation of sediment which would extend beyond the immediate project area, however the long term direct and indirect effects would be to restore sediment regimes through improved bank stability (EA pp. 18 – 19).
6. *Maintain and restore in-stream flows ...* One of the objectives of this project is to improve channel morphology. Instream flows would be positively affected as channel morphology develops, permitting pool development and stabilizing riffles (EA p. 28).
7. *Maintain and restore the timing, variability, and duration of floodplain inundation and water table elevation in meadows and wetlands.* One of the objectives of this project is to increase floodplain stability. Maintaining floodplain function is also a requirement under E.O. 11988. Reconnecting side

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channels and adding large woody debris to riparian areas will eventually restore floodplain function from its present condition (EA p. 21). Implementation will occur during periods of low flow and will not affect the capacity for inundation. Temporary roads will be decommissioned and drainage networks will be restored.

8. *Maintain and restore the species composition and structural diversity of plant communities in riparian areas and wetlands...* This project will have no direct effect on listed plant species composition (EA p. 28) however, plant communities may be affected by the introduction of invasive weeds during project implementation. Design Criteria # 7 through 12 have been incorporated to maintain native plant communities within the project area.

Maintain and restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species. This project will not affect federally listed or Sensitive plants, or listed wildlife species. This project “may impact” the terrestrial snail Puget Oregonian, a Sensitive species. Design Criterion #5 has been incorporated to prevent damage to host bigleaf maple trees (EA, p. 27).

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215 (revised, June 2004). The written appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at:

Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Pacific Northwest Region, Appeal Deciding Officer,
PO Box 3623, 333 SW First Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97208-3623 USA

email: appeals-pacificnorthwest-giffordpinchot@fs.fed.us.

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf). In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. E-mails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed or containing viruses, will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the appellant to confirm receipt of appeals submitted by electronic mail.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the *Columbian*, the newspaper of record. Attachments received after the 45 day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the *Columbian* is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed,

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implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Nancy Ryke, Mount Adams District Ranger, during normal office hours (weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Mount Adams Ranger District office (Address: Hwy 141, Trout Lake, WA 98650; Phone: voice (509) 395-3401, TDD (509) 395-3422 (hearing impaired); Fax: (509) 395-3424; e-mail: nryke@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Claire Lavendel

5/14/2007

Claire Lavendel
Forest Supervisor
Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Date

Attachment 1

PROJECT DESIGN CRITERIA

The following design criteria are an integral part of Alternative 2; they are prescribed to avoid or correct adverse impacts to hydrologic function, water, fish, wildlife and vegetation.

When appropriate, these criteria will be incorporated into the project contract. Unless otherwise noted, the contract administrator is responsible for seeing that the prescribed actions are accomplished.

1. Equipment Used

Equipment used for streambank stabilization would typically consist of a mix of the following: tracked excavators, tracked or rubber-tire log skidder or bulldozer with winch, log trucks, dump trucks, and trucks with equipment trailers.

2. In-water Work Windows

Forest Service personnel will collaborate with the State of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for timing of in-water work periods for the relevant ESA-listed fish. In-water work will be proposed for July 1 through September 30 of a calendar year, except where the potential for greater damage to water quality and fish habitat exists. Work outside this window shall not occur without specific justification and measures implemented to protect summer steelhead. To the extent practicable, instream work shall occur using equipment stationed on the banks. In addition, project activities will typically cease during wet periods, regardless of typical season, when there is potential to generate and deliver excessive sediment to the Wind River. In addition, work on private lands will not occur during the month of September, per landowner constraint.

3. Pollution and Erosion Control Plan (PECP) and Supporting Measures

A Pollution and Erosion Control Plan (PECP) will be developed for this project. The PECP will include methods and measures that minimize erosion and sedimentation associated with the project. The PECP elements will be in place prior to and at all times during the appropriate project phases. The following conservation measures will assist in the creation of a PECP:

A. Follow State Water Quality Guidelines - All project actions will follow applicable provisions of the Clean Water Act. A short-term exemption will be required from Washington Department of Ecology to exceed State water quality standards for turbidity. State standards require that Turbidity shall not exceed 5 Nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) over background levels when the background is 50 NTU or less, or a 10 percent

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increase in turbidity when the background turbidity is more than 50 NTU (WAC 173-201A).

B. Spill Prevention Control and Containment Plan (SPCCP) - The contractor will be required to have a written SPCCP, which describes measures to prevent or reduce impacts from potential spills (fuel, hydraulic fluid, etc). The SPCCP shall contain a description of the hazardous materials that will be used, including inventory, storage, handling, and monitoring.

C. Minimize Site Preparation Related Impacts - Site preparation will be completed in the following manner:

- i. The contractor shall have a written erosion and sedimentation prevention and containment plan for the project and shall have all necessary personnel, supplies, and equipment available to implement the plan promptly and effectively.
- ii. Boundaries will be flagged to delineate clearing limits associated with site access, and to minimize overall disturbance and disturbance to critical vegetation in staging and stockpile areas.
- iii. Staging areas will be established along existing roadways or the Beaver Campground area for heavy equipment storage, vehicle storage, fueling, servicing, and other equipment usage needs. Staging areas will be located beyond the 100-year-flood-prone area in a location and manner that will preclude erosion into or contamination of the stream or floodplain.
- iv. Clearing and grubbing activities will be minimized, if required for preparation of staging or stockpile areas. When staging areas are established, large wood, trees, riparian and other vegetation, sand, and topsoil will be stockpiled for use in site restoration.
- v. Hauling of trees for the project will require advance permission, to ensure that conditions are dry enough to prevent road damage.

D. Minimize Heavy Equipment Fuel/Oil Leakage - Methods to minimize fuel/oil leakage from construction equipment into the stream channel and floodplain include the following:

- i. The contractor shall have a written spill prevention and containment plan for the project and shall have all necessary personnel, supplies, and equipment available to ensure that the plan is promptly and effectively implemented.
- ii. All equipment used for instream work shall be cleaned and leaks repaired prior to arriving at the project. External oil and grease, along with dirt and mud shall be removed. All equipment shall be inspected before unloading at site. Thereafter, equipment shall be inspected daily for leaks or accumulations of grease, and any identified problems shall be fixed before equipment enters streams or areas that drain directly to streams or wetlands.
- iii. Equipment used for instream or riparian work shall be fueled and serviced in an established staging area (at least 150 feet away from the Wind River or other water bodies). When not in use, vehicles will be stored in the staging area.
- iv. Two oil absorbing floating booms appropriate for the size of the stream shall be available onsite during all phases of construction whenever surface water is present. Booms shall be placed in a location that facilitates an immediate response to potential petroleum leakage.

4. Site Restoration

A revegetation plan will be prepared by Underwood Conservation District. All disturbed areas shall be rehabilitated and stabilized by seeding and planting with native vegetation. Revegetation would be monitored and maintained for at least three years to ensure a

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minimum of 80 percent survival throughout revegetated areas. If survival falls below 80 percent, additional revegetation would be planted until the threshold for survival is met. Methods to minimize sedimentation through site restoration include the following:

- a. Upon project completion, project-related waste will be removed. Rehabilitation of all disturbed areas will occur in a manner that results in similar or better than pre-work conditions through spreading of stockpiled materials, seeding, and/or planting with native seed mixes or plants. If native stock is not available, soil-stabilizing vegetation (seed or plants) will be used that does not lead to propagation of exotic species.
- b. Access roads within the work, staging, and stockpile areas will be closed and obliterated when work is complete.
- dc Conifers will not be felled in the riparian areas for restoration purposes. Riparian conifers will only be felled for safety. If necessary for safety, trees will be felled toward the stream and left in place or placed in the stream channel or floodplain.
- d. Necessary site-restoration activities such as mulching will occur within five days of the last construction phase.

Conservation Measure from Fisheries Biological Evaluation.

5. Protect Puget Oregonian

In order to ensure protection of the *Puget Oregonian*, a Survey and Manage Mollusk species, felling, skidding, structure construction, and other ground disturbing activity would not occur within 25 feet of large (>12 inches dbh) Bigleaf Maple trees. Disturbance to large woody debris and leaf litter near these trees would also be minimized. Recommended from Wildlife Biological Evaluation.

6. Minimize Soil Disturbance

In order to minimize new surface disturbance, as well as comply with wishes of landowners, Sites 3a, 3b, 5, B1, B2, 7, 8, 10a, 10b, and 10c will be accessed by machinery from the east bank of the river instead of from Soda Springs or Szydlo Rds.

7. Minimize Spread of Noxious Weeds by Cleaning Equipment

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 should be done before entering National Forest Lands, and when equipment moves from or between project sites or areas known to be infested into other areas, infested 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.

8. Minimize Spread of Noxious Weeds by Using Clean Mulch

Use weed-free straw and mulch for all projects, conducted or authorized by the Forest Service, on National Forest System Lands. If State certified straw and/or mulch is not available, individual Forests should require sources certified to be weed free using the North American Weed Free Forage Program standards or a similar certification process. Mulch species shall preferably be from native seed sources or annual rye or cereal grain fields

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9. Minimize Spread of Noxious Weeds by Using Clean Gravel and Fill

Inspect active gravel, fill, sand stockpiles, quarry sites, and borrow material for invasive plants before use and transport. Treat or require treatment of infested sources before any use of pit material. Use only gravel, fill, sand, and rock that is judged to be weed free by District or Forest weed specialists.

10. Use Native Plant Materials

Native plant materials are the first choice in revegetation for restoration and rehabilitation where timely natural regeneration of the native plant community is not likely to occur. Non-native, non-invasive plant species may be used in any of the following situations: 1) when needed in emergency conditions to protect basic resource values (e.g., soil stability, water quality and to help prevent the establishment of invasive species), 2) as an interim, non-persistent measure designed to aid in the re-establishment of native plants, 3) if native plant materials are not available, or 4) in permanently altered plant communities. Under no circumstances will non-native invasive plant species be used for revegetation. Contact the District Botanist for appropriate seeding and site preparation prescription. When seed is used it should be either certified noxious weed free or from Forest Service native seed supplies.

11. Continue Preventing Spread of Noxious Weeds

Continue with efforts already underway to cut scotch broom before it sets seed on an annual basis to prohibit its reproduction and weaken its fitness. Monitor the size and distribution of infestations across the project area to assess changes in infestation levels annually. Map infestations on copies of aerial photographs or GIS ortho photographs annually for comparison and tracking of the species. Adjust efforts and methods as needed.

12. Document Noxious Weed Removal Activities for Forest

Tansy ragwort present on site should be pulled where encountered in the area. Control treatments for both scotch broom and tansy ragwort on national forest lands need to be recorded on the "Invasive Plant Site Treatment Form" and submitted annually to the District Botanist for Forest and Region-wide tracking of noxious weeds. See Appendix B for "Invasive Plant Site Treatment Form."

Attachment 2

Substantive Comments to the Middle Wind River Restoration Project EA and UCD/Forest Service Responses

SJB.1 **Comment:** (Gifford Pinchot Task Force) “Our only concern is the proposal to secure some of the structures using cables. If a structure or portions of a structure does mobilize, these cables could result in greater debris movement than would otherwise be the case. We’re confident that these structures will be sufficiently secure without the use of cables. We request that the Forest Service reconsider use of cables to secure the structures.”

Response: The use of cable is necessary to secure ?? structures to streambanks, based on a design prepared by a licensed engineer. Logs keyed into streambanks will be held in place by surrounding rocks and soil; only when suitable log lengths are unavailable will cable be used. The use of cable will be kept to a minimum.

SJB.2 **Comment;** As this is a Federal action, Ecology has no regulatory authority with regard to floodplain management. That being said, we would like to remind our Federal partner of their obligation under Executive Order 11988, particularly that section which states "...to avoid to the extent possible the long and short term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains..."

Response: The project complies with Executive Order 11988, and is designed to increase floodplain stability. Refer to Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objective #7 on page 8.

SJB.3 **Comment:**

Response:

SJB.4 **Comment**

Response:

Response: