



File Code: 1950-1

Date: November 18, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The Pacific Ranger District, Olympic National Forest, has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bear Creek Saddle commercial thinning project. An earlier EA, dated May 2006, was made available to the public for comment on May 5, 2006. Based on the analysis documented in the May 2006 EA Forest Supervisor Dale Hom made a decision on September 15, 2006 to implement Alternative B (modified). This decision was the subject of a lawsuit and on May 9, 2008 the court ruled against the Forest Service on a narrow issue of a NEPA procedural deficiency. As a result of that adverse ruling the decision of June 20, 2008 was withdrawn with the intent of issuing a new NEPA analysis to cure the procedural deficiency. This new analysis is documented in the November 2008 EA.

The EA describes and analyzes alternatives to meet the project's purpose of increasing structural diversity in single-storied, second-growth forest stands and accelerating the development of structural and compositional features of late-successional and old-growth forests. This project is located roughly along the Bear Creek West Twin Road (Forest Service Road 30) and to the north of the Bear Creek Road in Clallam County. The legal land description for this project is T30N, R10W, Sec 3, 4, 7-9, and 18; T30N, R11W, Secs. 10 - 15, 17, and 19; and T30N, R12W, Secs. 23 and 24.

The EA analyzes the following three alternatives outlined below, including a "No Action" Alternative:

- Alternative A (No Action). Under this alternative, the forest stands in the proposed project area would remain untreated. This alternative would retain all roads, both authorized and unauthorized, in their current condition.
- Alternative B, the preferred alternative, would thin approximately 2,189 acres of 45 – 60 year old stands in the Bear Creek, Deep Creek, and West Twin River watersheds that are uniform and simplified. A combination of existing Forest system roads, Bonneville Power Administration access roads, abandoned/unclassified roads, and less than 1 mile of new temporary roads would be used. Following thinning, the abandoned/unclassified roads and new temporary roads would be decommissioned.
- Alternative C is similar to Alternative B, but would thin 53 fewer acres than Alternative B and would adjust road usage and logging systems to further address potential wildlife and soil concerns.

The EA is available for your review and comment in accordance with regulations at 36 CFR 215.5. The EA is available on the Olympic National Forest web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/projects-nu/index.shtml>.



Comments will be accepted for a period of 30 days from the date legal notice of availability of the EA is published in *The Olympian* (Olympia, Washington). Persons submitting comments should provide the following information, which will become a matter of public record: name and address, title of the document on which comments are being submitted, and specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the commenter believes the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision. Commenters wishing to be eligible to appeal must include signature or be able to provide other verification of identity upon request.

The Responsible Official for the proposed action is Forest Supervisor Dale Hom. Persons wishing to comment on this project should address their comments to Forest Supervisor Hom in care of Tim Davis at the address or phone number shown below. Hand delivered comments will be accepted at the Forest Headquarters in Olympia, Washington between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Comments may also be submitted by e-mail, to the following address: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic-pacific@fs.fed.us. Those submitting electronic comments must put the project name in the subject line and must either submit comments as part of the e-mail message or as an attachment in one of the following three formats: Microsoft Word, rich text format (rtf), or Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf).

At the end of the 30 day comment period, comments received and responses to them will be included in an appendix to the EA, and Forest Supervisor Dale Hom will then make a decision. Notice of the decision will be published in *The Olympian*, *The Peninsula Daily News* and in the *Forks Forum*, and those who comment on the EA will receive a copy of the decision document.

For further information or to request a copy of the EA, you may contact Tim Davis at 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Ste. A, Olympia, Washington, 98512, or phone (360) 956-2375.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan D Piper".

SUSAN PIPER
Acting District Ranger

cc: Timothy E Davis