



File Code: 1950-1

Date: August 29, 2007

Dear Interested Party,

The Hood Canal Ranger District, Olympic National Forest, has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Jackson Thinning project. 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 between Mt. Walker and Seal Rock campground in Jefferson County within the following fifth field watersheds: Dosewallips River, Upper West Hood Canal Frontal, and Big Quilcene River. The legal land description for this project is T26N, R2W, Sections 2-3, 7-10, 14-18, and 20-23, and T27N, R2W, Sections 34-35.

The EA is available on the Olympic National Forest web site at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/projects-nu/index.shtml>. Hard copies of the EA can also be requested by contacting Yewah Lau whose contact information is below.

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

- No Action Alternative. 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 A would commercially thin approximately 2,313 acres of second growth forest stands in both Late Successional Reserve (LSR) and Adaptive Management Area (AMA). Forest stands in LSR proposed for thinning are approximately 52-71 years old, and those in AMA are approximately 100-112 years old. A combination of helicopter, cable, and ground-based logging systems would be used, and this alternative would also require the use of Forest Service system roads; unclassified, abandoned roads; and new temporary roads. Unclassified, abandoned roads (2.4 miles) and new temporary (3.8 miles) roads used would be decommissioned following project implementation.



- Alternative B differs from Alternative A by not thinning units on Mt. Walker (Units 20-24) to minimize impacts to recreation on Mt. Walker or Unit 6, which has scattered, remnant large, old trees within the unit. As a result, this alternative would thin approximately 1,606 acres. This alternative would construct or reconstruct approximately 2.4 miles of unclassified, abandoned road and 3.1 miles of new temporary road that would be decommissioned following project implementation.
- Alternative C proposes to thin the same number of acres as Alternative A, but with minimal use of unclassified, abandoned and temporary roads (0.4 miles of each).
- Alternative D is similar to Alternative A, except that it proposes to thin fewer acres on Mt. Walker and does not propose to thin Unit 6. This alternative would thin a total of 1,956 acres and would use and decommission 0.4 miles fewer of unclassified, abandoned road and 0.6 miles fewer miles of new temporary road than Alternative A.

Under all action alternatives, potential murrelet nest **or legacy trees** would be buffered and protected. It is worth noting that Unit 6, in particular, has many such trees, and the area that would actually be thinned may be substantially smaller than what is reflected in the maps provided in the EA.

My preferred alternative is Alternative B with a modification to include the portions of Unit 6 that do not have potential murrelet nest **or legacy trees**. Alternative B would exclude thinning stands on Mt. Walker, which are older and closer to the desired future condition than the other proposed units. This alternative would also minimize the impact to recreation on Mount Walker and lessen the amount of edge habitat that would be enhanced by thinning adjacent to the forest boundary around Mount Walker.

The Responsible Official for making a decision on this project is Forest Supervisor Dale Hom. Persons wishing to comment on this project, however, should address their comments to me in care of Yewah Lau at the address or phone number shown below. Hand delivered comments will be accepted at the between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Monday through Friday. Comments may also be submitted by e-mail, to the following address: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic-hoodcanal@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* and *The Peninsula Daily News*, and those who comment on the EA will receive a copy of the decision document.

For further information regarding the Jackson Thinning EA, please contact Yewah Lau at 1835 Black Lake Blvd. Ste. A, Olympia, Washington, 98512, or phone (360) 956-2405.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

/s/
DEAN YOSHINA
District Ranger