



File Code: 1950

Date: April 25, 2008

Dear Interested Party,

The Olympic National Forest is proposing to salvage blowdown trees from approximately 150 acres to capture timber value and to develop strategies for salvage which focus on a mix of ecological and economic benefits. This action would occur in the Trapper Creek Subwatershed within the Snow Creek Watershed and in the Salmon Creek Watershed. The legal location of the proposed stands for salvage is T29N, R2W, Section 31; T28N, R2W, Section 6; T28N, R3W, Section 1 and T28N, R2W, Section 4.

Forest Service personnel are preparing to conduct an environmental review for the proposed salvage as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It is expected that this project will fall within a category of actions listed in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and has no extraordinary circumstances that would preclude use of the categorical exclusions (FSH 1909.15, Chapter 30, section 31.2.13).

YOUR INVOLVEMENT

The purpose of this letter is to invite your participation in the NEPA analysis during our 30-day public notice and comment period. Comments in support or in opposition are welcome. In particular, if you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or you have issues or comments regarding potential effects of this proposed action, please send those issues or comments in writing to the project leader (Jason Jeffcoat, 1835 Black Lake Blvd. SW, Suite A, Olympia, WA 98512), or e-mail: comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic-hoodcanal@fs.fed.us.

Comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a notice in *The Olympian*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. With a publication date of April 25, 2008 the comment period will end on May 24, 2008. Those who provide timely and substantive comments will be eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

All comments received will become part of the public record and copies of comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, may be released for public inspection. Requests by individual respondents to have their home addresses withheld from the public record will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Such requests to withhold names and/or addresses must be stated prominently at the beginning of the comments. Anonymous comments will not be considered. Submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

This comment period is being provided 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.



PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Storms of 2006 and 2007 have blown down stands and patches of second growth forest in the Snow, Trapper and Salmon Creek drainages. Approximately 320 acres of forest have been impacted from these wind events with most areas adjacent, or in close proximity, to Forest Service 2845 roads. Given these forest conditions there may be opportunities to capture some timber value while taking management actions that help meet Forest Plan desired conditions. Of the 320 wind impacted acres, about 270 acres are designated Adaptive Management Area (AMA) with the remainder in Late Successional Reserve (LSR). No salvage activities would occur in LSR.

The Northwest Forest Plan-designated land allocations within the project area are Adaptive Management Area (AMA) and Riparian Reserves. The objective of AMA lands are to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems while developing new techniques for managing forest resources. In general, AMA objectives are similar to those of LSR but allow for more flexibility in order to foster a learning process and to try new strategies for implementation and restoring forest complexity. Riparian Reserves, overlaying other Northwest Forest Plan land allocations, are intended to protect the health of riparian and aquatic ecosystems.

The purpose of this action is to:

- Capture timber value for economic benefit; and
- Initiate a learning process for conducting salvage activities while meeting Forest Plan objectives

PROPOSED ACTION

The Hood Canal Ranger District of the Olympic National Forest proposes to salvage 150 acres of windthrown timber within the Snow and Salmon Creek Watersheds. The forest stands where blowdown would be harvested are in AMA and were 50-100 years old consisting of predominately Douglas-fir and western hemlock with small components of Pacific silver fir, western red cedar, and red alder. Adequate natural regeneration is anticipated post salvage but would be monitored and replanted as needed to ensure the re-establishment of forest cover as required by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

Salvage would occur within Riparian Reserves but only outside of the immediate zone of stream influence. No wood would be removed from streamcourses or where there is riparian vegetation associated with streams and wetlands.

Specific mitigation measures would be developed to address Riparian Reserves, soil and water quality and Northern Spotted Owls, including the retention of snags and coarse woody debris.

A commercial timber sale of an estimated 3.5 mmbf would be advertised and awarded during the 4th quarter of fiscal year 2008. There would be an estimated 0.46 miles of temporary road constructed, 0.50 miles of reconstructed road, and no new permanent road construction. All temporary roads would be decommissioned to the appropriate level post salvage. Based on Forest Service resource specialist recommendations the reconstructed roads would be closed

and stabilized. The proposed salvage would utilize a combination of ground-based and skyline yarding.

DECISION TO BE MADE

Based on environmental analysis, recommendations from Forest Service resource specialists and comments received during scoping, the responsible official (Forest Supervisor) will decide how much, if any, blowdown timber to remove, from what locations, and what mitigation measures will be included in the project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kathy O'Halloran

for

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Forest Supervisor

cc: Jason Jeffcoat