

DECISION NOTICE #3
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

RESTORATION 2003 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

USDA FOREST SERVICE
MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST

The Restoration 2003 Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for wildlife habitat, fish habitat and water quality restoration projects. Projects are located across the Mt. Hood National Forest, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and on adjacent private lands. Many projects are included in the EA, but this decision notice only addresses a portion of those projects. Many were already included in previous decision notices. The projects in this decision notice occur exclusively on the Mt. Hood National Forest.

DECISION and RATIONALE

I have decided to select projects included in Alternative 2. Alternative 2 will meet the purpose and need discussed in the EA (page 3) by implementing the following projects:

Projects Included in this Decision Notice	Projects Included in Decision Notice dated August 18, 2003	Projects Included in Decision Notice dated July 14, 2003	MAP ID	Project Name	Notes
		X	C-1	3520.650/Robinhood	Culvert removed and not replaced
		X	C-2	3500.681/Meadows	Two culverts removed and not replaced. Once replaced with log ski bridge.
		X	C-3	3520/Robinhood	Culvert removed and not replaced
X			C-4	Hutson Dr/Evans Creek	Off-Forest
		X	C-5	1700.663/N Fork Mill	Culvert removed and not replaced
			C-7a	2700/Jordan	
	X		C-7b	4820/Gate	
	X		C-8	4830/S Fork Gate	
		X	C-9	4811/Threemile	
		X	C-10	1721/S Fork Mill	
	X		C-11	4400/Eightmile	
	X		C-12	1600/Tony	
		X	C-13	1800/Red Hill	
		X	C-14	1800/Marco	
		X	C-15	1800/McGee	
		X	C-16	1300620/Laurel	
		X	C-17	1350/Laurel	
	X		C-25	1520/Bridal Veil	Nine culverts

		X	C-26	4600.267/Tag	Culvert removed and not replaced.
		X	C-29	4620/Whale	
		X	C-30	Kiwanis/L ZZ River	Two culverts
	X		C-37	1010/Deer	
	X		C-38	10/Deer	
	X		C-39	1210/S F Bull Run	
	X		C-40	1825.380/Cast	
	X		C-41	10/Cougar	
	X		C-42	1010/Cougar	
	X		C-44	10/Bear	
	X		C-45	1010/Bear	
X			C-47	1720.193/N Fork Mill	
		X	F-2	Wildcat Exclosure	
		X	P-1	Wolf Run @ Eightmile	
		X	Q-1	1520 road	
		X	Q-2	1500.020 @ Larch Mt	
		X	Q-3	2130.105 near The Dalles	
X			RR-2	Bonnie Butte	Repair road 4891
			RR-3	13/1310	Road repair
X			RR-4	Devils Half Acre	Repair road into Devils Half Acre. Upgrade culvert to bridge.
	X		RD-1	Fishhook Roads	Obliterate most of system
		X	RD-2	4300.221 and 3530.240	Convert 4300.221 to trail and obliterate 3530.240.
	X		RD-3	1400/1405, 1500.020, 2130.105, 8400.217, and one in Rowena	
		X	RD-4	4610.240/250 @ Shining Lake trailhead	
	X		RD-5a	4640.012	
	X		RD-5b	6322.170	
		X	RD-6	2618	User created road from end of 2618
		X	RD-7	Twin Springs	
	X		RD-8	Aschoff Rd./1820	
			IR-1	15 Mile Riverkeeper	Off-Forest portion, LWD, Repair flood damaged channel, Lyda Ditch Piping, Road Closure via gating.
		X	IR-1	15 Mile Riverkeeper	On-Forest portion including approximately 300' downstream of Forest Boundary, In-stream and bank stabilization.
			IR-2	Robinhood Cr LWD	
			IR-3	Bear Cr Riparian Thin	
X			IR-4	McGee Cr Riparian Thin	
X			IR-5	Lake Branch Riparian Thin	
		X	IR-6	Eagle Creek	Eagle Creek planting fish privacy seen

		X	IR-7	Multnomah Falls	Multnomah Falls riparian planting
			IR-8	Upper Clackamas LWD	Between Big Bottom and Collawash
	X		IR-9	Summit Guard Station	Channel repair near parking lot
	X		IR-10	Salmon Riverkeeper	Resort @ The Mt/Wee Burn Creek, Off-Forest
X			IR-11	Arrah Wana	Build upstream U's in Salmon River to water rehab reach, Off-Forest
X			IR-12	Salmon River	Side channel maintenance
	X		IR-13	Zigzag River	LWD and boulders
X			IR-14	Little Zigzag River	LWD, boulders, bank stabilization, PCT, riparian conifers
X			IR-15	Clear Creek	Off-Forest, LWD, boulders, planting
		X	V-1	Rowena	Remove small conifers from oak stands
		X	W-1	Talc	Talc RS snag and LWD creation
			W-2	Clackamas River Thinning Projects	Four snag and LWD creation projects

The projects included in this decision notice were not included in the first decision notice published on July 14, 2003, or the second decision notice published on August 18, 2003. Some projects were delayed by factors such as the timing of surveys and reviews by other agencies. These surveys and reviews have been completed and documented and the projects may proceed. Projects without a checkmark ("X") are subject for a future decision based on completion of surveys and/or reviews.

It is my decision to select portions of Alternative 2 over the other alternatives considered for the following reasons:

Alternative 1, the no-action alternative, was not selected because it would not provide any of the benefits described in the purpose and need. It would not provide benefits to wildlife, fish or water quality. No action would result in continuation of resource impacts such as:

- Erosion from storm damaged roads;
- Blockage of fish passage by culverts that are too small, and;
- Leakage and erosion from irrigation ditches.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 is the no-action alternative and was not selected because it would not repair specific problem areas that have been identified as urgent. In some cases passive restoration may occur over a long time period but in most cases, chronic problem areas would continue to prevent watersheds from becoming fully functioning and healthy in terms of water quality and fish habitats. Important fish stocks that are at risk would not be assisted toward recovery.

Consideration was given to including only the projects that were already funded. This would have been a much shorter list of projects. The sources of potential funding are many and varied, but because funding may materialize in the near future, it was decided to include all projects with certain and potential funding.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (40 CFR 1508.27)

Based on the environmental analysis documented in the EA, I have determined that this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination is based on the design of the selected alternative and the following factors:

- **THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES** – Formal consultation with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service concerning the **northern spotted owl** was not required. The projects would not modify habitat but there would be disturbance due to noise of equipment. A seasonal restriction would be used to minimize disturbance during the critical breeding period. Some of the projects would have no effect and others would have an effects determination of “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect.” These projects are covered by a programmatic biological opinion (EA page 32).

Consultation with NOAA Fisheries concerning listed **anadromous fish** has been completed for this analysis through the February 25th, 2003 Programmatic Biological Opinion for ongoing Forest Service activities. A seasonal restriction for in-stream work would minimize impact during the time of year when fish are most sensitive (EA pages 11 and 27).

There will be no adverse effects to sensitive species of plants or animals (EA pages 20, 27, 33 and 37).

Therefore, the project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species nor will it cause a trend to federal listing or loss of viability for any proposed or sensitive species.

- **CONSISTENCY WITH MT. HOOD FOREST PLAN** – The proposed action is consistent with the Management Area goals, desired future conditions, and standards and guidelines identified in the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan.
 - I have determined from the record that the project is designed to contribute to maintaining or restoring the fifth-field watershed over the long term, even if short-term effects may be adverse. Streams will be enhanced and riparian reserves will be carefully managed. There would be some short-term sedimentation risk from equipment working in or near streams but the projects are carefully designed to minimize sediment. Long-term benefits would outweigh short-term impacts (EA pages 15 to 30).

- Projects in or near wild, scenic or recreational rivers are consistent with applicable standards and guidelines and each river's outstandingly remarkable values.
 - Surveys have been conducted where needed for Survey and Manage Species. Known sites of Survey and Manage Species are being managed in accordance with management recommendations.
 - Projects are consistent with standards for scenery, wildlife management, noxious weeds, hydrology, air quality and heritage resources (EA pages 15 to 43).
- CUMULATIVE EFFECTS – The analysis considered not only the direct and indirect effects of the projects, but also their contribution to cumulative effects. The analysis considered other potential sources of sediment such as timber harvest, road construction and activities off-Forest. No significant cumulative or secondary effects were identified. The EA elaborates on cumulative impacts and cumulative benefits. It discloses that impacts would be short term and largely mitigated, while benefits would be long term and substantial (EA pages 16 to 19).
 - HEALTH AND SAFETY - There will be a minimal effect on public health and safety. Job hazard analyses will be documented for projects to provide for safety of operations. A site analysis has been conducted which implements the direction given by the Record of Decision and Mediated Agreement for the "Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation" Environmental Impact Statement. The use of herbicides is not being proposed for any project. Mitigations have been included to minimize the risk of spreading noxious weeds.
 - CULTURAL RESOURCES - Field surveys have been conducted and protection measures incorporated.
 - OTHER - The effects are not likely to be highly controversial and do not involve highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks. This action will not set a precedent because other similar actions have occurred in the past. The project was not found to threaten a violation of any Federal, State, or local law. The project complies with Executive Order 12898, regarding environmental justice. No disproportionately high adverse human or environmental effects on minorities and/or low-income populations were identified during the analysis and public information process. No significant irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources were found. There will be no affect to Wild and Scenic Rivers and State Scenic Waterways, wetlands, wilderness areas, research natural areas or any other areas with unique characteristics. The project will not affect public health or safety. Adverse and beneficial impacts have been assessed and found to be not significant.

The environmental assessment was available for a 30-day public comment period that ended on June 11, 2003. No substantive negative comments were received at that time or any time before. There has been some correspondence offering support for restoration projects.

Appeal Rights:

No substantive comments were received on this project during the 30-day public comment period; therefore, this decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.8.

Project Implementation:

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately.

The EA can be downloaded from the Forest web site at www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/ under *Projects & Plans*.

For further information contact Jim Roden, Estacada Ranger Station, 595 NW Industrial Way, Estacada, OR 97023. Phone: (503) 630-8722 Email: jroden@fs.fed.us

Responsible Official:

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Date Decision Published