



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Medford District Office

3040 Biddle Road

Medford, Oregon 97504



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Memorandum

To: Field Office Supervisor, Roseburg Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service

From: District Manager, Medford

Subject: *Submission of Medford Bureau of Land Management (BLM) District Analysis and 2008 Biological Assessment of Forest Habitat*

Attached is the *Medford Bureau of Land Management (BLM) District Analysis and 2008 Biological Assessment of Forest Habitat*. This document analyzes Medford District's program of work.

The BLM has worked closely with the US Fish and Wildlife Service over the past year to refine our scope of work and reduce impacts to spotted owls. The June 2008 draft Biological Assessment evaluated 60 timber sales and vegetation management projects that proposed to treat a total of 38,114 acres in the Klamath Mountains and Cascades West Physiographic Provinces. This final Biological Assessment significantly reduced the proposed action to 43 timber sales and vegetation management projects totaling 26,313 acres in the Klamath Mountains and Cascades West Physiographic Provinces. Sixteen timber sales within the BA are sold timber sale contracts. Many projects included have been evaluated in previous Biological Opinions, which were subsequently withdrawn by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. As we have previously consulted on these projects, this proportion of the Proposed Action is considered a reinitiation.

The Proposed Action evaluated in this Biological Assessment avoids adverse impacts to both the current and former designated spotted owl critical habitat. There are no vegetation projects, timber sales, or adverse impacts to designated marbled murrelet critical habitat. No habitat removal or adverse change will occur to existing late successional reserves or adaptive management reserves. No projects are proposed within any 100 acre LSR spotted owl core area.

A revised Owl Estimation Methodology incorporated more rigorous evaluation of nest patch treatments and caused updates to the Project Design Criteria. This new information has been incorporated into the final Biological Assessment. The Proposed Action in the draft Biological Assessment intercepted 241 owl provincial home range circles out of the 595 total owl home

range circles analyzed in the Action Area. The final Biological Assessment Proposed Action intercepts 122 spotted owl provincial home ranges out of the 595 analyzed in the Action Area.

Rough and Ready Lumber Company, requested and was granted applicant status on this consultation under authority of 50 C.F.R. § 402.02. They are the high bidder for the Chew Choo timber sale, which is being reinitiated in this consultation. Rough and Ready Lumber Company provided comments on this consultation to BLM. The BLM has forwarded these comments and recommendations to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service completed a Recovery Plan for the Northern Spotted Owl and identified Recovery Actions to guide action agencies in recovering spotted owls. This Biological Assessment incorporates information from the Recovery Plan and identifies where BLM is cooperating on Recovery Action recommendations.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service requested BLM provide information on Recovery Plan 32 for the Northern Spotted Owl. A portion of this Biological Assessment contains projects that occur in the older and more structurally complex multi-layered forest described in Recovery Action 32. These include the sixteen sold sales, mentioned above. Below is a summary of the total acres in the Proposed Action, including timber sales and vegetation treatments, that occur in structurally complex, multi-layered forest as described in Recovery Action 32 by Physiographic Province and Treatment Type.

Structurally Complex Multi-Layered Forest			
Planned Action Acres	Physiographic Province		Total
	Klamath	Cascades West	
Total Acres	3,776	1,056	4,832

These 4,832 acres in structurally complex forest are a portion of the total project acres BLM estimated would be treated in a recovery action 32 implementation summary to be provided under separate cover to Paul Henson, State Supervisor, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Service Office. All of the projects in the Proposed Action of this Biological Assessment that occur in structurally complex forest have a significant investment of time and resources, as defined by BLM and provided in that summary.

Projects were planned to conform to the Northwest Forest Plan and the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan. All projects will be implemented as described in this Biological Assessment, and impacts will remain as described or less. BLM is in the final stages of a plan revision for Western Oregon. The Record of Decision is scheduled for December, 2008. All projects conform to the proposed Resource Management Plan. No changes to the proposed action or baseline habitat will occur as a result of the transition to the proposed Resource Management Plan. Any changes to land management allocations tied to the proposed Resource Management Plan will not occur on the ground until future projects are planned in those areas.

BLM will consult on any future activities and evaluate the environmental baseline for such future projects in subsequent Biological Assessments. Until those projects are planned, evaluated and have undergone the consultation process, no changes to the environmental post-project baseline described in this Biological Assessment will occur.

This final Biological Assessment as well as previous drafts have been reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and have completed Medford District, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest Level 1 team review. All comments and corrections received have been evaluated and incorporated where appropriate into this final Biological Assessment.

Please review the *Medford BLM District Analysis and 2008 Biological Assessment of Forest Habitat* to evaluate the projects that “May Affect” northern spotted owls and marbled murrelets and may affect northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet critical habitat. We request concurrence on the projects that are totally “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect,” and request formal consultation on the other projects that are “May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect.”

We look forward to working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to meet our joint obligations under the Endangered Species Act 7(a) 1 and 7(a) 2 to conserve habitat for endangered species, to avoid jeopardizing listed species and to avoid adverse modification of designated critical habitat.

Attachments:

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