



File Code: 1950

Date: April 5, 2005

Dear Interested Party,

This letter is being sent to notify you of an addition to the Bear Creek Saddle project area to the north of the Bear Creek Road. The Olympic National Forest proposes to use thinning treatments to accelerate tree growth and the development of structural and compositional features of late-successional forests within the Bear Creek, Deep Creek, and the West Twin River watersheds. The project area lies roughly along the Bear Creek West Twin Road (Forest Service Rd. 30) and to the north of the Bear Creek Road (see attached map). The legal land description for the project is: T30N, R10W, Secs. 3, 4, and 7-9 and 18; T30N, R11W, Secs. 9-15, 17-19; and T30N, R12W, Secs. 23 and 24 (added sections). This additional area has been included in the project because stands in this area were found to be of similar stand condition as and were within close proximity to the original project area.

Your Involvement

Due to the new addition to the project area, this letter is being sent to landowners adjacent or near the new project area, as well as those who received the initial scoping letter to solicit additional public comment. If you have already replied to the initial April 13, 2004, scoping letter, you need not respond to this letter unless you have additional comments.

If you have information you feel the Forest Service may not be aware of, or feel you have issues (points of dispute, debate, or disagreement) regarding potential effects of this proposed action, please send those issues in writing to the project leader (Yewah Lau at the Olympic National Forest, 1835 Black Lake Blvd., Suite A, Olympia, WA 98512, or call 360-956-2405). Comments may also be sent via e-mail to comments-pacificnorthwest-olympic-pacific@fs.fed.us. Please respond by April 30, 2005. We will use any significant issues that are identified to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action. Those who respond to this scoping will receive a copy of the Environmental Assessment for a 30-day review and comment period. If you have no comments at this time, but would like to remain involved, please let us know.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this proposal is to:

- Increase structural diversity of forest stands, develop a multi-layered canopy, and enhance growth and coverage of herbaceous species on the forest floor.

There is a need for forest stands that are healthy and structurally diverse. The majority of these stands within the proposed project units are single-storied, second-growth stands that are experiencing a slowing of growth due to overcrowding. Additionally, these stands do not provide adequate habitat for old-growth dependent species.



If no action is taken, this overstocked condition would result in stands with reduced vigor, increased mortality, and reduced diversity. If no action are taken in riparian reserves, stands would have reduced capability to produce the size and quantity of large woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability of the riparian reserves and associated streams.

The desired condition for this area includes a diverse, multi-storied stands that provide improved habitat for late successional and old-growth dependent species. Such stands would also contain openings that enhance herbaceous plants on the forest floor and provide enhanced forage for deer and elk.

Proposed Action

The Olympic National Forest proposes to use commercial thinning in simplified, young, second-growth stands to accelerate the development of some of the structural and compositional features of late-successional forests and accelerate growth of stands within the Bear Creek, Deep Creek, and the West Twin River watersheds.

The entire planning area includes approximately 2,700 acres of stands that are approximately 40 to 60 years old. Proposed logging systems would include tractor logging, cable logging, and potentially helicopter logging. Access for treatment would be primarily through reconstruction of Bonneville Power Administration access roads and existing closed roads. Some short segments of new temporary road and safety spurs, as well as a temporary bridge across Bear Creek also may be needed. Preliminary concerns voiced by the public in response to the initial scoping letter include potential impacts to aquatic resources, as well as the use and subsequent treatment of temporary roads.

The additional project area would be accessed by via reconstructed closed roads, Bonneville Power Administration access roads, the Bear Creek Road, and the Bear Creek West Twin Road. While there would be a need for landings and safety spurs away from the powerlines, no new temporary roads are currently anticipated for this area. The interdisciplinary team is also aware of a permitted water line on National Forest land in the southwest corner of Sec 24, T30N, R12W and would protect it accordingly.

Management Direction

The Northwest Forest Plan-designated land allocations within the project area are Late-Successional Reserve (LSR), Adaptive Management Area (AMA), and Riparian Reserve (RR). The objective of LSR lands is to protect and enhance conditions of late-successional and old-growth forest ecosystems. AMAs were designated to encourage the testing of innovative approaches to integrating ecological, economic and other social and community objectives. Riparian Reserves, overlaying other Northwest Forest Plan land allocations, are intended to protect the health of the riparian and aquatic system. The Sol Duc watershed is a Tier 2 Key Watershed, indicating that it is a source of high water quality and may not contain at-risk fish stocks. The Olympic National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan land management designation for the project area is E1 (Timber Production) and applies where allowed by the Northwest Forest Plan.

The project is expected to meet the following Forest-wide standards and guidelines, as well as the following relevant management area direction: Forest Plan (including the Northwest Forest Plan and its amendments), the Olympic Adaptive Management Area Guide, and the Soleduck Late Successional Reserve Assessment. Additional information and management recommendations are provided in the Sol Duc Watershed Analysis, Deep Creek and East and West Twin Rivers Watershed Analysis.

Sincerely,

/s/

EDUARDO OLMEDO
District Ranger

cc: Yewah Lau