DECISION NOTICE
And
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

# CLOAK THINNING

USDA FOREST SERVICE
MT. HOOD NATIONAL FOREST
CLACKAMAS RIVER RANGER DISTRICT
CLACKAMAS COUNTY, OREGON

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for the Cloak Timber Sale. This area is located in T.6S., R.7E.; T.6S., R.8E.; T.7S., R.7E.; T.7S., R.8E.; Willamette Meridian. The project area is located in the Upper Clackamas, Lower Clackamas and Oak Grove Fork watersheds.

The purpose of this initiative is to manage young forest stands to achieve multiple objectives (EA p. 4):

- Increase health and vigor and enhance growth that results in larger wind firm trees;
- Enhance and restore biological diversity;
- Enhance forage for deer and elk;
- Provide forest products consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan goal of maintaining the stability of local and regional economies now and in the future;
- Enhance riparian reserves by accelerating the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions.

## DECISION and RATIONALE

**I have decided to select Alternative B with modifications.** Due to recent uncertainties regarding the management of northern spotted owl suitable nesting/roosting/foraging habitat within critical habitat units (CHUs), I have decided to defer units that are nesting/roosting/foraging habitat that are within CHUs. In this case, all five of the harvest units (86 acres) that contain nesting/roosting/foraging habitat are in CHUs. These are natural second-growth stands that have some scattered large remnant trees (units 466, 468, 501, 507 and 566). I have decided to thin the rest of the units even though it will temporarily degrade northern spotted owl dispersal habitat. After harvest, the units will continue to function as dispersal habitat and they will experience all of the benefits of thinning discussed in the EA including increased health, larger tree size, greater diversity and in the long term, they could become nesting/roosting/foraging habitat sooner. Alternative B as modified, meets the purpose and need discussed in the EA (page 4) by implementing the following:

Thin and harvest wood fiber from approximately 1258 of the original 1332 acres of matrix land and approximately 205 of the original 217 acres of riparian reserves (EA p. 8-10). Variable density thinning prescriptions are designed to enhance or restore biological diversity. Thinning will leave approximately 80 to 140 variably spaced trees per acre, (exceptions are described below).

**Forage** - A total of approximately 70 acres of scattered forage enhancement areas will be included within the plantation units in the matrix. These areas will be one to three acres in size and will retain approximately 10-30 trees per acre. These forage enhancement areas are not created openings and they are not permanent. They are elements of diversity where a wider spacing is used within a thinning to temporarily enhance forage. Forage value would gradually decrease as the leave trees grow and the crowns close.

**Riparian** – Approximately 80 variably spaced trees per acre will be retained in riparian reserves to accelerating the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions. Riparian reserve widths are 180 feet for non-fish-bearing streams and 360 feet for fish-bearing streams. There will be no-harvest buffers of approximately 30 to 50 feet along streams.

**Connectivity** –Where natural second-growth stands occur in the connectivity network, thinning will create a two-layer stand and retain a canopy cover of approximately 60%. This applies to approximately 89 of the original 144 acres in units 475, 494 and 495.

**Fertilization** - Approximately 1049 acres of plantations within the matrix will be aerially fertilized.

**Roads** - Approximately 1.4 of the original 1.8 miles of new temporary roads will be constructed. These roads will be obliterated and revegetated after completion of the project. Approximately 3.4 miles of existing decommissioned or overgrown roads will be reopened. Upon project completion, the roads that were opened will be closed. Approximately 1 mile of road reconstruction is included. This includes pavement grinding on road 58 and a small slump repair on road 4640 near unit 500.

**Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Design Criteria** on pages 22 –28 of the EA are included with this alternative. No significant impacts were found that would require further mitigation.

**Variability** – The proposal is to introduce structural and biological diversity through variable spaced thinning (EA p. 4, 6, 8-9, 23-25). Diversity and variability will be introduced in several ways: 1) Leave tree spacing will vary within units and between units, 2) Leave trees will include minor species, 3) Leave trees will include some trees with the elements of wood decay, 4) Leave trees will include some live trees where their crowns touch certain key snags, 5) Some snags and all existing large down logs will be retained, 6) Leave tree spacing will be wider in riparian reserves, 7) No harvest buffers will be included along streams, 8) Leave tree spacing will be narrower in the connectivity network, 9) Leave tree spacing will be wider in forage enhancement areas, and 10) skyline corridors will create gaps.

**It is my decision to select a modified Alternative B over the other alternatives considered for the following reasons:**

- The modified Alternative B accomplishes the objectives discussed above.

- **Water Quality and Fisheries** - There is a public concern about ground disturbing activities including road construction and logging in riparian reserves and about fertilization.

    - The analysis of Alternative B shows that the temporary roads pose minimal risk because they do not cross any streams, and are on stable, dry, gently sloping terrain (EA p. 30-43). The location, road design, seasonal restrictions, and obliteration after project completion, combine to reduce the risk of impacting water quality and fisheries. Similarly the harvest units have been designed to minimize effects to water quality and fisheries by having no-harvest buffers and by thinning in a manner that enhances long-term riparian conditions. Low impact logging systems will be used on steep slopes. Seasonal restrictions and erosion control measures are included. Fertilization will not occur in riparian reserves and will occur when weather conditions are favorable to optimize absorption and to avoid runoff or leaching.

- **Harvesting of Natural Second-Growth Forest** – There is a concern that the proposed harvest may impact stands that have not been managed before. Comments have questioned the science behind thinning natural second-growth stands and feel they should be left to grow on their own.

    - Approximately 221 of the original 307 acres of stands (70 to 95 years of age) that grew up naturally after a forest fire will be thinned. The remaining units do not contain scattered large legacy trees. Growth in these stands has slowed and thinning will enhance health and growth (EA p. 45).

- **Forage** – Some comments question the need to create forage for deer and elk. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has advocated for creating forage and would like to see larger forage enhancement areas.

    - In the past, regeneration harvest was the primary method for providing forage. In recent years, regeneration harvest has declined and the plantations that once provided forage are growing up and forage is being shaded out. Thinning prescriptions can be adjusted to provide some forage to partially make up for this decline (EA p. 47, 61-62). I understand the value of larger forage enhancement areas for deer and elk but I have chosen the smaller size because the Cloak area has multiple objectives such as earthflow stability and timber productivity.

**Description of Other Alternatives and Reasons for Non Selection:**

- **Alternative A** is the no-action alternative. It was not selected because it would not provide any of the benefits described in the purpose and need and it would not provide any forest products consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan goal of maintaining the stability of local and regional economies. If no action is taken, stands would become overcrowded resulting in trees with reduced vigor, increased mortality and increased wind damage susceptibility.

Trees would stagnate and stay relatively small. Forage would continue to decline across the landscape to the detriment of deer and elk. If no action is taken in riparian reserves, stands would have reduced capability to produce the size and quantity of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain desired physical complexity and stability of the riparian reserves and associated streams (EA p. 43-46).

- **Alternative C** is responsive to issues 1, 2 and 3. It would avoid road construction, logging in riparian reserves and fertilization (EA p. 18). It would partially meet the purpose and need for matrix but growth would be less than Alternative B since it does not fertilize. Since it would build no roads, helicopters would be used where necessary to remove logs. Alternative C would avoid all of the riparian reserves resulting in stands that would have reduced capability to produce the size and quantity of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain desired physical complexity and stability of the riparian reserves and associated streams. I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative C because the risk of sedimentation from building temporary roads on gentle slopes with no stream crossings is very minimal with Alternative B, while the cost of helicopters is not warranted to achieve a very minimal, if any, reduction of sedimentation risk (EA p.30-43). I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative C because rapid growth and large trees are better for riparian reserves than stagnated unhealthy small trees (EA p. 43-48). I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative C because the risk of fertilizer entering streams is minimal compared to the benefit of improved tree growth (EA p. 34).

- **Alternative D** is responsive to issues 1, 2, 3 and 4. It is similar to Alternative C but in addition it would avoid all of the natural second-growth stands (EA p. 19). Alternative D would partially meet the purpose and need. I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative D for the reasons listed above for Alternative C and I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative D because the benefits of thinning natural second-growth stands in terms of health and stand development are long lasting while the impacts are short term (EA p. 45). None of the 140 acres of natural second growth are classified as nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the northern spotted owl (EA p. 49-52).

- **Alternative E** is responsive to issue 5. It is similar to Alternative B but would have larger forage enhancement areas. They would be 3 to 5 acres instead of 1 to 3 (EA p. 20). I have chosen Alternative B over Alternative E because the larger forage enhancement areas could impact future timber productivity (EA p. 45). Some units are on earthflows, and I am choosing to not make larger forage enhancement areas there at this time.

- **Other Alternatives Considered** (EA p. 20-21)

  - An alternative was considered that would include restoration projects such as road closures and road decommissioning. Comments were received suggesting that we not mix restoration projects with timber harvest projects. These restorations are not connected actions and are not included in the range of alternatives for this analysis. Road closure and decommissioning projects have been assessed in a separate Forest-wide Restoration Environmental Assessment.

  - An alternative submitted by the public that would protect all snags was considered. With the other action alternatives, snags would be saved where safety permits but many that are

hazardous would be felled. This alternative would establish a no-harvest safety zone around each snag to keep loggers out of the hazardous area. Survey data shows that there are approximately 4-10 medium and large snags per acre within the natural second-growth stands and none in plantations. The hazardous zone around just one snag would be approximately one acre in size (assuming an average height of 120 feet). Trying to avoid the hazard zones around all snags would eliminate all of the natural second-growth harvest units. It would be very difficult to develop this alternative because snags are continually changing. In the 2 to 3 years between planning and logging, live trees may die and become hazardous snags. Snags that are a hazard today may fall by the time harvest occurs and no longer present a hazard. There is no way to predict today how many hazardous snags would have to be felled to prevent injuries to forest workers. I have concluded that it would be unfeasible to develop an alternative that would protect all snags within a timber sale that occurs over a 2 to 3 year period. An alternative that protects all existing snags is essentially the same as Alternative D.

- An alternative submitted by the public for riparian reserves was considered. It would thin very small diameter trees by hand, with the cut trees left on the ground to add to the down woody debris layer. The stems that would be left on the ground would not be large enough to be considered coarse woody debris, which refers to wood that is generally larger than 20 inches diameter. Thinning only the very small trees would not achieve the desired condition of releasing riparian trees. Since there is currently no likely source of funding for this type of operation it would be similar to Alternatives C and D that have no management in riparian reserves.

- An alternative submitted by the public that would eliminate the forage enhancement areas was considered. Instead it would create much smaller gaps (0.25 –1 acre, preferably less than 0.5 acre). The gaps would have scattered trees in them and be surrounded by areas with moderate to high retention of trees (little or no thinning). This would be done in all stands except in riparian reserves. The purpose of the gaps would be to enhance diversity. This alternative does not provide large enough areas to allow sufficient sunlight to the forest floor to meet forage objectives. It would be similar to Alternatives C and D that have no forage enhancement areas.

- An alternative submitted by the public that would eliminate all harvest units where the existing percentage of detrimental soil conditions exceeds Forest Plan standards was considered. Although this alternative was not developed as a separate alternative it is within the range of alternatives being considered. The range of alternatives includes a no-action alternative that is applicable to any of the units considered in this proposal. I have the discretion to not go forward with any or all of the units being proposed including those that currently exceed standards for soil conditions. Eliminating these harvest units would not accomplish the purpose and need and would be similar to the No-action Alternative. Also, Forest Plan standard FW-28 indicates that rehabilitation to restore soil conditions is appropriate. If no action is taken in these units and natural recovery is allowed to proceed, it would take much longer for soils to recover compared to using equipment to decompact temporary roads, landings and certain skid trails.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT** (40 CFR 1508.27)

Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the EA and the comments received from the public, 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** has been completed for this project. The Biological Opinion written by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and dated February 27, 2003 concluded that this project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the northern spotted owl or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Mandatory Terms and Conditions that implement the Reasonable and Prudent Measures specified in the Biological Opinion include a seasonal restriction within ¼ mile of known activity centers and progress reporting (Design Criteria #1, EA p. 22).

    - The modified Alternative B will defer harvest in units that are nesting/roosting/foraging habitat. The remaining units are in dispersal habitat, which will be temporarily degraded by thinning. This deferral will change the original effects determination for habitat modification from Likely to Adversely Affect to Not Likely to Adversely Affect.

    - I have considered the new information that has been recently published about northern spotted owls (documented in Appendix E). The new information would not lead to a change in the effects determination and no additional analysis is needed for this project.

    - Some questions arose during the 30-day comment period about whether the forage enhancement areas would remove dispersal habitat. The forage enhancement areas that will be incorporated into the plantation thinning prescription are not created openings. They are elements of diversity where a wider spacing is used on one to three acres within a thinning unit. I concur with the judgment of the wildlife biologist, that the proper context to view dispersal habitat is at the stand and landscape levels. The stand level is appropriate for determining site-specific effects and the larger landscape scale is appropriate for cumulative effects. After thinning, the composition and structure of each stand will vary. Within a stand, some areas will be denser and other areas less dense. The stand as a whole will continue to be dispersal habitat, and in the long term, variable-density thinning with forage enhancement areas will contribute to accelerating the development of spotted owl habitat and dense prey populations in plantations. (EA p. 49-52).

  Informal consultation with NOAA Fisheries concerning threatened or endangered **anadromous fish** and Essential Fish Habitat established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act has been completed for this project. Letters of Concurrence from NOAA Fisheries dated December 19, 2002 and May 9, 2003 are in the analysis file. Lower Columbia River Steelhead, Upper Willamette River Spring Chinook, and Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon have an effects determination of "May affect, Not likely to adversely affect" (NLAA). Other listed fish will have a rating of "No Effect."

There will be no significant adverse effects to sensitive species (EA p. 24, 30, 36-38, 54, & 73). 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 Management Area goals, desired future conditions, and standards and guidelines identified in the Mt. Hood National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended (Forest Plan).

  - **Aquatic Conservation Strategy** - I have considered the relevant information from the watershed analyses (summarized in Appendix E). I have also considered the existing condition of riparian reserves, including the important physical and biological components of the fifth-field watersheds and the effects to riparian resources. I find that Alternative B is consistent with the recommendations of the watershed analyses, is consistent with riparian reserve standards and guidelines, and will contribute to maintaining or restoring the fifth-field watersheds over the long term (EA p. 41, EA Appendix E p. E10-E15).

  - It is consistent with **late-successional reserve** (LSR) objectives. The project is not in an LSR or any 100-acre LSRs (EA p. 5 & 11).

  - The FSEIS to Remove or Modify the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines was issued in 2004. The Record of Decision moved many species from the requirements of the **Survey and Manage** Standards and Guidelines to sensitive species. However, it also indicated that projects still in the planning stage that had begun or completed surveys using the Survey and Manage Standards and Guidelines could proceed without conducting a new sensitive species analysis. Surveys have been competed to the Survey and Manage protocol and no species were found that require the management of known sites (EA p. 39, 54, & 73).

  - It is consistent with standards for deer and elk management, threatened, endangered and sensitive species protection, noxious weeds, hydrology, air quality, heritage resources, scenery, and timber management (EA p. 30 to 84).

  - It is consistent with the National Forest Management Act regulations for **vegetative management**. There will be no regulated timber harvest on lands classified as unsuitable for timber production (36 CFR 219.14) and vegetation manipulation is in compliance with 36 CFR 219.27(b), (EA p.66 & EA Appendix E p. E1).

  The Forest Plan describes the process for documenting an exception to "Should" standards and guidelines (p. Four-45). "Action is required; however, case by case exceptions are acceptable if identified during interdisciplinary project planning environmental analyses." I approve the following exceptions:

  - The Cloak project is consistent with Forest Plan objectives for long-term **soil productivity**. In many units, ground based yarding will occur on areas where there is existing soil disturbance. The analysis shows that nine units will be above 15%

detrimental soil condition. I am approving an exception for Forest Plan standards and guidelines FW-22, FW-28 and FW-30. Examination of the sites has found that certain soils have high rock content where compaction risk is not great, or that the use of existing roads, skid trails and landings with restoration, will result in less impact than would be caused by using skyline logging systems with new skyline corridors and in some cases new roads, and new landings. I considered using helicopters to log these units but found the additional cost to be unwarranted. Units using ground based logging systems that are above 15% will have temporary roads and landings obliterated. Rehabilitation has been considered for skid trails but the soil scientist does not recommend restoration of skid trails at this time because of the risk of damaging tree roots and because productivity has not been impaired. The no-action alternative would have areas that remain above 15% with no opportunity for restoration.

The objective of maintaining long-term site productivity will still be met with Alternative B. Surface erosion and runoff from old skid trails is not occurring. Even though there was no standard for long-term soil productivity when the original clearcuts were logged, the stands continue to grow well and are projected to continue to grow well after the proposed thinning. Recent stand exams in the Cloak units show that plantations that have detrimental soil conditions above 15% have very similar growth rates compared to nearby similar plantations that are below 15% (EA p. 66-70).

- The Cloak project is consistent with Forest Plan objectives for **earthflow** stability. Ground based yarding will be used on earthflows where soil disturbance will be 8% or less or in plantations where ground based systems were used in the original logging. The analysis shows that ten units in earthflows will be above 8% detrimental soil condition. I am approving exceptions for Forest Plan standards and guidelines B8-36 and B8-40. Examination of the sites has found that the use of existing roads, skid trails and landings with restoration, will result in less impact than would be caused by using skyline logging systems with new skyline corridors and in some cases new roads, and new landings. I considered using helicopters to log these units but found the additional cost to be unwarranted. The no-action alternative would have areas that remain above 8% with no opportunity for restoration. The objective of earthflow stability will still be met with Alternative B because thinning will result in healthy and vigorous stands with strong well-developed roots (EA p. 43-45, 70-71). Units using ground based logging systems that are above 8% will have temporary roads and landings obliterated. Rehabilitation has been considered for skid trails but the soil scientist does not recommend restoration of skid trails at this time because of the risk of damaging tree roots.

- The Cloak project is consistent with Forest Plan objectives for **snags and down logs**. The standard and guideline for snags is FW-215 and he standards and guidelines for down logs are FW-219 through FW-229. I am approving an exception for these Forest Plan standards and guidelines.

  Design criteria have been incorporated into the EA to help retain snags (EA p. 23) but it is likely that some snags would have to be felled for safety reasons. Past experience indicates that the natural second-growth stands may be able to meet the snag standard and guideline. There are few if any medium or large snags in the plantation units. Some

small suppressed planted trees have died but they are not large enough to provide much snag habitat and they do not last long. None of the alternatives, including no-action, would achieve the snag standard in plantations in the short term. The DecAID advisor is a planning tool for snags and down logs that was considered in the development of design criteria and evaluation of effects (EA p. 23 & 56). Design Criteria #6 results in leaving live trees with the elements of wood decay which would provide habitat in the interim until trees grow large enough to produce snags of the desired size, (greater than 22 inches diameter). When these trees with elements of wood decay die they would provide small to medium size snags that would benefit some snag dependent species. Alternative B will accelerate the growth and size of plantation trees and would eventually provide large snags much sooner than would be expected with the no-action alternative. The objective of providing long-term snag habitat will be met (EA p. 55-61).

In terms of down logs, the project will retain all existing down logs but they are not necessarily at the desired level for quantity, size or decomposition class. Design criteria #7 results in leaving some additional down wood. Alternative B will accelerate the growth and size of trees and would eventually provide large down logs much sooner than would be expected with the no-action alternative. The DecAID advisor was considered in the development of design criteria and evaluation of effects for down logs (EA p. 23 & 56). The objective of providing long-term down log habitat will be met (EA p. 55-61).

There is potential for an enhancement project within the 2003 Forest-wide Restoration EA that would create additional small snags and down logs in the plantations of the Cloak project, if funded.

- The Cloak project will not close any system **roads** that are currently open. Temporary roads that are constructed with this project will be closed upon project completion (EA p. 62-63) and open road density will remain unchanged. Public comments indicated a desire to separate timber sale projects from restoration projects (EA p. 20). Many miles of system roads have been closed in recent years on the Clackamas River Ranger District including many in the Cloak project area. Several District-wide and Forest-wide restoration EAs have been developed in recent years to close roads. In the future, additional road closures would be addressed in restoration EAs. I am approving an exception for Forest Plan standards and guidelines FW-208, B2-028, and B8-021. Open road density will continue to be above standards and guidelines in approximately half the Cloak project area for all alternatives including no action.

- WATER QUALITY AND FISHERIES - The analysis shows that the roads pose minimal risk because they do not cross any streams, and are on stable, dry, gently sloping terrain. The location on gentle terrain, seasonal restrictions, the obliteration after logging, and erosion control efforts combine to reduce risk. Sediment, if any, would not occur in quantities great enough to result in harm to downstream fish or change water quality. The proposed action meets Riparian Reserve standards and guidelines and state water quality standards and the Clean Water Act. All of these objectives, standards and laws were established to ensure there would be no significant reduction to water quality or fish habitats. Thinning in Riparian Reserves is designed to benefit riparian resources by accelerating the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions (EA p. 30-42).

- HARVESTING NATURAL-SECOND GROWTH – The analysis shows that natural second-growth stands are overstocked and experiencing slowing of growth (EA p. 45). After thinning, these stands will have the spacing they need to grow, will be healthier and would develop strong roots. Of the 221 acres of natural second growth that will be thinned in the modified proposal, none are classified as nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the northern spotted owl (EA p. 49-51). Harvest in the matrix is appropriate because it enhances health and growth while providing forest products consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan goal of maintaining the stability of local and regional economies now and in the future (EA p. 4). The Forest Plan contains goals for these stands to maintain health and to provide wood fiber (#43 & 44, Forest Plan p. Four-55).

- CUMULATIVE EFFECTS - The analysis considered not only the direct and indirect effects of the projects but also their contribution to cumulative effects. Past, present and foreseeable future projects have been included in the analysis (EA p. 30). The analysis considered the proposed actions with BMPs and design criteria. The EA elaborates on cumulative impacts related to resources such as water quality, older forest, soils and wildlife. No significant cumulative or secondary effects were identified.

- CULTURAL RESOURCES - Field surveys have been conducted. The heritage resource report concludes that there will be no effect to any properties on or eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (2002-06-06-03-0004 and 2003-06-06-03-0001). Documentation has been forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Office (EA p. 80).

- 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 (EA p. 81). 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 (EA p. 84). There will be no effect to Wild and Scenic Rivers and State Scenic Waterways, wetlands, wilderness areas, research natural areas or any other areas with unique characteristics. The area is not affected by recent wilderness proposals. The project will not affect public health or safety (EA p. 75-76). Adverse and beneficial impacts have been assessed and found to be not significant. No significant effects to consumers, civil rights, minority groups, women, prime farmland, rangeland, forestland, wetlands, or floodplains were identified.

**Comments:**

The proposed action and a preliminary analysis were available for a 30-day public comment period that began on July 5, 2004. I have considered the substantive comments that were received. The responses to the comments are contained in Appendix A of the EA.

**Appeal Rights:**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215. Any individual or organization that submitted substantive comments during the comment period may appeal. Any appeal of this decision must be in writing and fully consistent with the content requirements described in 36 CFR 215.14. The Appeal Deciding Officer is Linda Goodman, Regional Forester. An appeal should be addressed to the Regional Forester at any of the following addresses. Postal: ATTN.: 1570 APPEALS, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623; Street location for hand delivery: 333 SW 1st Ave, Portland, OR (office hours: 8-4:30 M-F); fax: 503-808-2255. Appeals can also be filed electronically at: appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only. E-mails submitted to email addresses other than the one listed above, or in formats other than those listed, or containing viruses, will be rejected. It is the responsibility of the appellant to confirm receipt of appeals submitted by electronic mail.

The Appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the date legal notice of this decision was published in the Oregonian. For further information regarding these appeal procedures, contact the Forest Environmental Coordinator Mike Redmond at 503-668-1776.

**Project Implementation:**

Implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the 45-day appeal filing period described above. If an appeal is filed, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition (36 CFR 215.10).

The EA can be downloaded from the Forest web site at http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood in the Projects & Plans section.

For further information contact Jim Rice, Estacada Ranger Station, 595 NW Industrial Way, Estacada, OR 97023. Phone: (503) 630-6861 Email: jrrice@fs.fed.us

| Recommended By: | | Responsible Official: |
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| **ANDREI RYKOFF** | **for** | **GARY L. LARSEN** |
| **District Ranger** | | **Forest Supervisor** |

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