



File Code: 1950-1

Date: September 17, 2010

Dear Interested Public,

The Klamath Ranger District is pleased to report that the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Westside Fuels Reduction Project Environmental Assessment (a Healthy Forest Restoration Act project) is available for review. This document is enclosed for your convenience. The environmental assessment (EA) is available on the Fremont-Winema National Forests' website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/frewin/projects/analyses/westside.

The Westside Project Area is crescent shaped and located on the north, east and south sides of Pelican Butte. The Pelican Butte Semi-primitive Recreation Area, Sky Lakes Wilderness Area, and Sky Lakes B Inventoried Roadless Area are upslope and to the west of the project. The planning area is entirely within the Rocky Point wildland-urban interface (WUI) boundary established in the Rocky Point Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The primary purpose of the project is to reduce the risk of severe wildfire in the area adjacent to the Westside Road and three communities at risk identified by the Rocky Point CWPP.

We used the comments you provided during collaboration and scoping to refine the proposed action (the selected alternative) and add particular design features. We also used your comments to identify resource concerns that required additional analysis and points that needed additional clarification in the environmental assessment. I feel that the selected alternative balances the objectives for the project and your comments. We may not have fully met all of your concerns, but your comments were considered and addressed in a balanced manner. We appreciate your involvement in our planning process and we hope to work with you on future planning efforts.

The Westside Fuels Reduction Project will reduce hazardous fuels on 3,960 acres in the 10,340 acre planning area through a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed burning treatments. Mechanical treatment methods will consist of tree thinning from below (including the sale of vegetative material), machine and hand piling, hand thinning, and slashbusting or mowing. The proposed harvest method is thinning from below where the emphasis is to leave the largest and most fire resistant trees. The prescription includes the retention of trees over 30 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) in matrix designated areas. In late successional reserve, trees greater than 21 inches in diameter will be retained. Post harvest fuel reduction treatments include, as appropriate, whipfelling of excess zero to four inch stems; machine and hand piling



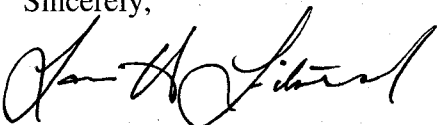
and burning of slash concentrations if needed, slashbusting or mowing; and jackpot burning and under burning of the accumulated natural fuels.

Also included in this decision is Non-significant Forest Plan Amendment #21 for the Winema Land and Resource Management Plan that would provide a 0.25 mile protection zone around northern spotted owl sites and provide a nesting roosting seasonal closure from March 1 through August 10. The amendment also contains a 660 foot protection zone around bald eagle nest sites and winter roost trees. This amendment would make the project consistent with updated U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines and recent science on spotted owl and bald eagle disturbance buffer distances and allow for more timely project implementation.

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12 (Decisions and action not subject to appeal) and implementation may begin immediately. The objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218 provided the sole means of administrative review for this HFRA project. This objection process has been completed. The environmental assessment was previously mailed out for the 30-day objection period beginning on July 16, 2010. An advertisement announcing the availability of the environmental assessment and the objection period was published in the Herald and News, a Klamath Falls newspaper, on July 16, 2010. Four objections were received and considered. The Reviewing Official, Deputy Regional Forester Calvin N. Joyner, responded to all of the objections in writing.

For further information, or to request a paper copy of the EA, contact Environmental Coordinator Tami Fikstad at the Chiloquin Ranger District, 38500 HWY 97 N, Chiloquin, OR 97624, (541)783-4039 or Wildlife Biologist Jen Sanborn at the address above, (541)783-4087.

Sincerely,


for MARGARET DAVID BAILEY
District Ranger

Encl. (1)