

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

SUPPLEMENT TO

INDIANBERRY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT
NO. 12

NORTH FORK JOHN DAY RANGER DISTRICT
UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST



FEBRUARY 14, 1996



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Umatilla
National
Forest

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Reply to: 1950-1

Date: February 14, 1996

Subject: Supplement to the Indianberry Environmental Assessment

To: Indianberry Project File

The Decision Notice for the Indianberry Environmental Assessment was signed on May 6, 1993 by Umatilla Forest Supervisor Jeff Blackwood. The Decision Notice (attached) documents the selection of Alternative 3-modified as the preferred. This decision was modified in a letter to the Indianberry Project File signed by John P. Kline, Acting Forest Supervisor on June 15, 1994. That letter (attached) documents the changes from the original decision. This letter will document changes from the modified decision that will be implemented in the Oasis Salvage Sale.

The "Interim Management Direction Establishing Riparian, Ecosystem and Wildlife Standards for Timber Sales" amended the Umatilla National Forest Plan in May of 1994. This established a screening process for timber sales. This amendment was revised by the Regional Forester in June of 1995 to provide additional direction for wildlife standards regarding timber sales. After the June 1995 revision was approved, the Indianberry IDT again reviewed the original Indianberry Timber Sale preferred alternative. Of the original 21 units proposed for harvest, two were sold under the Indianberry Timber sale; units #14 and #30. After additional analysis, the IDT recommended that of the remaining 19 units, units #2,3,4,6,7,9,11,12,22,23,29 and 38 should be harvested to meet the long-term management goals established for the area. The screening process on the remaining 19 units is described in Lew Wallenmeyer's (wildlife biologist) final screening notes dated October 1995 (attached). It was decided this new project will be called Oasis Timber Sale and will be sold in FY 1996.

The original decision established a 2,800 acre security area in the southern portion of the planning area. This area was established in cooperation with ODFW as part of a District wide network to provide an area for big game escapement as mitigation for large scale salvage harvest. It will not be implemented as the District wide salvage harvest program was not implemented. Although not formally designated, the area will still provide the big game escapement it was designed for, as no harvest units occur within this area and most of the roads planned for closure in conjunction with the security area are closed under the District's Access and Travel Management Plan.

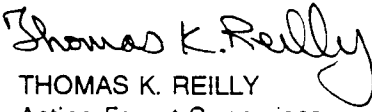
In the original Indianberry decision, road 3990 was scheduled to have five miles of reconstruction to improve sight distance, the road surface, and drainage. Some of this work has been accomplished with the installation of driveable water bars and smoothing of the road surface. The remainder of the reconstruction work proposed in the EA will be included as part of the Oasis Salvage Sale. The reconstruction work will be accomplished through purchaser credit generated by the sale and will be completed if the value of the sale generates sufficient credit.



Part of road 3986 was closed (5.34 miles) in the original decision and measures were proposed to reduce potential sediment sources. This closure decision was revisited as part of the District's Access and Travel Management Program and the amount of road 3986 that was closed was reduced to 1.54 miles. The section of this road that will remain open has had driveable water bars installed to help reduce potential sediment sources. A post harvest evaluation will be done on this road in terms of elk vulnerability to determine if a change in its open/closed status is warranted.

Other projects that were part of the original decision, such as riparian fencing, will still be implemented as described in the EA and Decision Notice.

Since, in the interdisciplinary review of these proposed changes to the modified decision it was determined that these changes will have less environmental effects than the original decision, I have determined that they will not have to be documented in a new decision notice.


THOMAS K. REILLY
Acting Forest Supervisor

Attachments



DECISION NOTICE

INDIANBERRY SALVAGE AND REHABILITATION PROJECT AND FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT #5

REVISION NO. 1 TO INCLUDE
FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT #12

Grant County, Oregon
USDA - Forest Service
Umatilla National Forest
North Fork John Day Ranger District

This Decision Notice documents the Forest Service decision to revise the original Decision Notice and FONSI signed on May 6, 1993 to include Forest Plan Amendment #12.

The information in this document is described in more detail in the original Environmental Assessment (EA) and the associated Analysis File, as well as the additional analysis completed for this revision. This information documents the analysis of the area and is available for public review at the North Fork John Day Ranger District, Ukiah, Oregon. The EA and Revision are tiered to the "Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)" and Record of Decision (ROD), dated June 11, 1990; and to the "Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation" FEIS, ROD, and Mediated Agreement, dated December 8, 1988. In addition, the actions are consistent with Amendments 8 and 11 of the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the requirements of the Pacific Northwest Region Environmental Assessment for the continuation of interim management direction establishing riparian, ecosystem and wildlife standards for timber sales, as revised on June 5, 1995; and with interim management strategies provided in the PACFISH Forest Plan Amendment No. 10.

The Indianberry Planning Area is located approximately 20 air miles south of Ukiah, Oregon. The analysis area includes approximately 16,100 acres and is within the Indian, Little Indian and Huckleberry creek subwatersheds. The legal description includes portions of T.8S., R.31E.; T.8S., R.32E.; T.8S., R.33E.; T.9S., R.32E.; and T.9S., R.33E., W.M.

DECISION

A recent interdisciplinary team review of units 29 and 36 as proposed in Alternative 3 - modified (the preferred alternative identified in the May 6, 1993 Decision Notice and FONSI) resulted in a preferred treatment prescription to open the stands enough to successfully regenerate ponderosa pine, while still retaining some late and old structure on the site. This prescription would involve the removal of dead trees and live Douglas-fir and grand fir trees in excess of the wildlife tree and green replacement tree requirements. On some of the acres within these stands it would remove approximately 5 live trees per acre that are greater than 21 inches DBH. This prescription is not consistent with the Forest Plan as amended by the "Interim Management Direction Establishing Riparian, Ecosystem and Wildlife Standards for Timber Sales" (timber sale screens) in that live trees greater than 21 inches DBH will be removed. However it is consistent with the overall intent of the timber screens in that the prescription will move this stand toward the late and old structural (LOS) stage that it historically occupied.

It is my decision to issue a site specific, non-significant Forest Plan amendment for this project which will help achieve the desired future condition for this area. The amendment is as follows:

The Forest Plan is amended by allowing an exemption from the 21 inch DBH removal limit for live trees in late old structure stands for units 29 and 36 of the Indianberry Planning Area. These units will be sold under a separate timber sale called Oasis Salvage Sale.

All other aspects of the EA, and Decision Notice and FONSI dated May 6, 1993 (including supplements dated June 15, 1994 and January 11, 1996) will remain the same. There will be no changes to other activities and mitigation measures listed in these documents.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

My decision to amend the Forest Plan was based on achieving the desired future condition for these stands as identified in the original EA. These stands are a dry, warm ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir type that are currently overstocked with Douglas-fir and grand fir. An objective of the original EA was to remove some of the shade tolerant fir and regenerate with ponderosa pine to provide for long-term stand stability. The IDT review that proposed this amendment determined that it could be implemented with no additional effects to the area other than those already disclosed in the original analysis for Alternative 3 - modified.

PUBLIC INPUT

A public comment period on changes in implementation of Alternative 3 - modified began on September 30, 1995 and ended on October 20, 1995. Four letters were received. In addition, this project was included in the Fall 1995 publication of the Umatilla National Forest's Schedule of Proposed Activities.

NFMA CONSISTENCY

Any project proposed for implementation has to meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). In accordance with these requirements, I conclude from the results of site specific analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment and Analysis File that:

The revision documented in this Decision Notice is consistent with the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended) and Record of Decision dated June 11, 1990; and is in compliance with the requirements of 36 CFR 219.27.

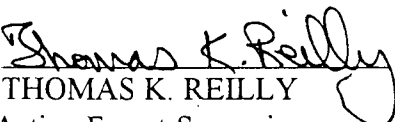
ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision for the Oasis Salvage Sale qualified as a salvage sale as described in the provisions of subsection 2001(e) of Public Law 104-19. Under that legislation salvage sales are not subject to the provision of the appeal regulations at 36 CFR 215.

The documents and procedures required for the preparation, advertisement, offering, awarding, and operation of this salvage sale, shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of the applicable environmental laws as listed in subsection 2001(i) of Public Law 104-19.

This decision is subject to judicial review only in the United States district court for the district in which the affected Federal lands are located. As required under section 2001(f)(1) of Public Law 104-19, any challenge to this salvage sale project must be filed in the district court within 15 days after the advertisement of the sale.

For further information, contact Craig Smith-Dixon, District Ranger at the North Fork John Day Ranger District, P.O. Box 158, Ukiah, Oregon, 97880 or call (541) 427-3231.


THOMAS K. REILLY
Acting Forest Supervisor

2/14/96
Date