DECISION NOTICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT, and FINDING OF NON-SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENT

for the

LOON FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

USDA Forest Service
Umatilla National Forest
Walla Walla Ranger District
Union County, Oregon

Legal Location: Portions of T. 2 N. R. 38E sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 23; T. 3 N. R. 38 E. sections 11, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 34, 35, and 36; T. 3 N. R. 39 E. sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32; T. 4 N. R. 39 E. sections 17, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33, Willamette Meridian

Background

The Walla Walla Ranger District, Umatilla National Forest spent the summer and fall of 2006 to develop a proposal to treat and reduce surface and aerial fuels within the Palmer Valley Wildland Urban Interface area, identified in the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). In addition to the fuel treatments stands where identified with the opportunity to improve conditions and manage for seral tree species. The Palmer Valley Wildland Urban Interface Area is ranked number four when considering the landscape's wildfire hazard, the overall fire protection capability/structural vulnerability of the local community, the values the community identified as needing protection, how weather would play a role in fire behavior, and the opportunity for fuel reduction projects. The CWPP identified projects that furthered emergency response as the most important followed by actions that reduced fuel hazards. Projects or activities that would support emergency response include road system improvements to provide access or escape routes and water source developments. Actions that reduce fuel hazard include those that would breakup the landscape to confine wildfire or increase suppression capabilities. Interconnected areas characterized by a fire behavior that hand crews could suppress safely would aid in reducing the spread of wildfire and the movement of fire towards the communities at risk (Palmer Valley WUI). Fuel reduction projects in the outer fringe of the Wildland Urban Interface would aid in reducing the risk of wildfire reaching the Palmer Valley, Valley View Road Area, and the City of Elgin; communities identified by the CWPP as at risk.

Forest stands on the National Forest are transitioning to more complex fuel structures; approximately 70 percent of the planning area is condition class 2 and 3. The moist forest stands making up the mixed fire regime (approximately 70 percent of the planning area) are increasing in understory and intermediate tree density while surface fuels are getting more complex. The landscape as a whole is moving toward a fire behavior characteristic of Fuel Model 10, like that described for condition class 3. Fuel Model 10 is characterized by extreme fire behavior, one that cannot be safely held by a hand crew without assistance using other suppression tools.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan acknowledges that Union County depends on the landscape to sustain its livelihood. Much of the land is primarily suited for agriculture and forest products. Timber played a key role in Union County's early economic development but has steadily declined in economic value since the late 1970s. Wood products still remain the most prominent source of employment in the manufacturing sector for the county. Timber is a valuable resource in the County representing a commodity in the form of raw materials and finished products as well as amenity resources such as the Grande Ronde Valley's scenic beauty and outdoor opportunities. Timber resources are also acknowledged for their important role in maintaining water quality and wildlife habitat. A large wildfire, of any magnitude, would severely impact the economy by reducing the amount of wood available for market, impacting tourism and recreational opportunities, as well as the quality of life of the local population. Individuals involved with the development of the CWPP indicated they valued the aesthetics of the Grande Ronde Valley, outdoor recreation, clean air and water, and vegetation and wildlife habitat; all of which they felt could be detrimentally affected by wildfire. (Union County Community Wildfire Protection Fire Plan)

Decision

After careful review of public comments, the environmental assessment, and analysis file, I have decided to implement Alternative C (see EA pages 24 to 28) with modifications in the types and amount of treatments proposed in the Little Phillips Creek Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA). Included in the decision is a forest plan amendment to allow timber harvest in the Little Phillips Creek RHCA. Timber harvest is proposed on 1,924 acres using harvester/forwarder and skyline/helicopter logging systems. Both saw log and chip material would be available for local industry. Stand management prescriptions for the purpose of reducing surface and aerial fuels and stocking levels include improvement, commercial thinning, patch cuts, and salvage. Green trees larger than 21 inches would not be cut or removed unless they are a danger tree along the road system or adjacent to a landing. The action is proposed to provide safe and effective suppression measures to be taken for the protection of the Palmer Valley Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Two types of vegetation treatments would occur within the Little Phillips Creek Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA). In the upper reaches of Little Phillips Creek, where the stream is between Highway 204 and a treatment unit, only danger trees would be cut and surface fuels hand piled for burning. The danger trees would be left in the RHCA unless they pose a safety problem to traffic or could damage the highway. Where the stream is on the opposite side of the highway from a treatment unit, crown density inside the RHCA would be reduced to lower the risk of fire moving through the crown.

The action would use approximately 41 miles of roads for timber haul and access. Road maintenance includes surface rock replacement, spot surfacing, roadside brushing, erosion control, logging out, road surface blading, ditch cleanout, slide removal, dust abatement, culvert cleaning, or replacement, hazard tree removal, and other items that contribute to the preservation of the existing road and its safe use. Approximately 1,800 feet of temporary road would be built to access Unit 27 followed by decommissioning. A temporary culvert will also be placed in the upper reaches of Gordon Creek to utilize FR 3725038. Logging slash would be treated using a variety of methods including understory thinning, understory burning, mastication/grapple piling, hand piling and burning, and jackpot burning. In addition to the timber harvest, approximately 800 acres of noncommercial thinning would occur. A summary of the Alternative is displayed in Table 2 below, comparison of alternatives.

Reasons for the Decision

I carefully considered concerns raised during scoping and the opportunity to comment (EA Chapter 4, pages 115-122). I considered six alternatives to the proposed action. My reasons for not analyzing three alternatives in detail are disclosed in the EA, Chapter 2 (EA pages 13 and 14). The following narrative presents why I did not

select Alternatives A, B, or D. I also discuss how my decision responds to the purpose and need and how I considered the issues most relevant to me in making my decision.

Reasons for Not Selecting Alternative A (No Action)

I considered, but did not select Alternative A, the no action alternative, because it does not address the purpose and need and leaves forest stands within the WUI transitioning toward complex fire behavior. It does nothing to reduce severity of wildland fire within and near the Palmer Valley WUI area; nor does it improve the ability of a hand crew to successfully suppress a wildfire.

Reasons for Not Selecting Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Alternative B was not selected because it did not provide as much strategic fuel treatments as Alternative C. The primary difference between the two alternatives is the amount of acres treated along Highway 204 for both fuel treatments and danger tree reduction. Extending danger tree reduction from 1.3 miles in Alternative B to 5.2 miles in Alternative C removes hazards that have increased over many years. Removing trees with eminent risk for hazard and those likely to become a hazard in the next 10 years reduces the amount of trees needing yearly removal and allows trees to be placed in the stream channel where they do not pose a risk to damaging the road or traffic safety. Alternative B was not selected because it would have higher impacts to fisheries habitat and riparian functions. Alternative B removes more crown closure than other alternatives. The riparian action occurs in an area with year round redband trout. Since more trees would be removed near the stream, fish would be impacted longer by the action and direct impacts to the stream more likely from the felling and removal operations.

Reasons for Not Selecting Alternative D

I did not select Alternative D because it does not fully accomplish the purpose and need for action. Alternative D is responsive to issues raised to leave more forest cover for big game and old forest and providing canopy closure to reduce or slow down the development of ladder fuels in the understory. However, it does not accomplish treatments in stands needing stocking level control or management of seral tree species. Alternative D provides the best protection of riparian functions by cutting and leaving danger trees (unless they pose a risk to traffic safety or could damage the highway) within the Little Phillips Creek RHCA; no other stand treatments would occur; however, fine fuels would be hand piled. I considered this additional protection important in the perennial portion of the stream so have modified Alterative C to include cutting and leaving danger trees in this decision. The hand piling and removal of small ladder fuels would help to keep fire from moving into the crown. Leaving riparian trees would increase fuel levels over time and Alternative C provided the best treatments for controlling fire behavior in the section of stream that is intermittent.

Purpose and Need

I believe my decision affirmatively addresses and best meets the purpose of and need for action. Based on information given to me by the public and information found in the EA and project file I believe there is a clear need to create, maintain, or extend low fuel conditions supportive of controlling wildfires within and adjacent to the wildland urban interface, to increase resilience of stands to fire and insects, and provide for public and fire fighter safety.

Reduce fuels and improve stand conditions to address the concerns and opportunities highlighted in the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

I selected the modified Alternative C because it does the most to develop fuel conditions supportive of the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan; it increases areas where successful suppression efforts can occur and provides or maintains a network of stands that can be used to control the size and spread of wildfire. It includes a stocking level control component that focused treatments in areas of western larch while avoiding areas of important old forest networks.

My decision affirmatively addresses the need to treat the landscape for fuel reductions and stand improvement. Prescriptions would primarily focus on thinning small diameter trees, including those that would provide chipwood and will help maintain large trees on the landscape. This decision will not cut green trees larger than or equal to 21 inches in diameter (except for occasional danger trees) and would reduce their risk to damage or being killed by wildfire and insects by utilizing treatments that would remove ladder fuels and overstocked conditions.

Improve stands dominated by western larch, and improve the landscape's resilience to major disturbance events

My decision increases the representation of early seral species in stands that are departing from historic conditions. Western larch is losing its position because openings are not being created for it to regenerate into and the over stocked conditions are not favorable for growth. The decision treats stands in the mixed and frequent fire regimes by thinning overstocked stands, reducing surface fuels, and increasing the height to crown by removing low and intermediate trees in the overstory as well as the understory. Seral tree species will be favored in the managed stand because they are more resistant to fire and insects when growth rates are maintained. Alternative C also treats more of the dry forest stands favoring ponderosa pine. Treatments adjacent and above Highway 204 would thin young ponderosa pine so that crowns do not touch, reducing the risk for fire to move through the crowns.

Provide greater safety for firefighters and protection of Wildland Urban Interface areas

Since Alternative C proposes the largest amount of treatment acres accomplishing fuel reduction objectives, it provides the best choice for developing safe conditions for taking suppression actions along Highway 204 and the ridge system within the Palmer Valley Wildland Urban Interface. Wildfire could be suppressed at lower costs because more of the area would have fuel conditions that would allow a three to four person engine crews to successfully suppress fires.

My decision would reduce fire intensities and lower the severity of a wildfire along Highway 204. It reduces the ability of fire to move through crowns by reducing stocking levels and crown density above the highway. Stand prescriptions would protect riparian function where trees could be safely left in the RHCA and are a potential source for large wood recruitment. The proposed hand piling and burning of fuels within the Little Phillips Creek RHCA would help to reduce potential severe fire behavior by removing small fuels and small ladder fuels

Amend the Forest Plan to allow timber harvest to reduce crown density and remove danger trees inLittle Phillips Creek Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA)

The amendment applies to all danger tree and fuel reduction actions proposed within the Little Phillips Creek RHCA along Highway 204 and the site-specific project called Loon. This amendment recognizes that the location of Highway 204 in the creek's floodplain hinders the attainment of PACFISH RMO's. Three PACFISH standard and guidelines (timber harvest, fuels treatment, and danger trees) needs to be added to allow activities to occur. A more detailed explanation can be found on pages 4, 15-16.

The following table compares the purpose and need with some outcomes of my decision.

Table 1 – Measures of Meeting the Purpose and Need

Purpose and Need Chapter 1 page 4	
1. Modify the intensity and resulting fire behavior to that characterized by Fuel Model 8 on portions of the landscape to allow suppression actions that would reduce the impacts and size of a wildland fire would help to contain a wildfire, provide for firefighter safety and protect Wildland Urban Interface areas.	1,379 acres of fuels reduced by removing ladder fuels, reducing crown density, and removing fire intolerant species.
2. Increase resilience of stands to disturbance from insect, disease, or wildland fire.	832 acres treated to reduce stand density and encourage disease resistant species.
3. Improve stands dominated by western larch.	850 acres to encourage larch regeneration
4. Provide "bio-mass" products for utilization by local industry.	2,211 acres proposed for small tree removal. Saw log and chip material.
5. Improve firefighter and public safety	46.2 miles of danger tree removal along National Forest roads; 5.2 miles along Highway 204.

Issues

Both individuals and groups raised issues and concerns during the development of this project and I considered them to help make my decision. Two significant issues were used to develop alternatives to the proposed action. More detailed information concerning issues considered can be found in Chapter 1, pages 8-9, and in Chapter 3 of the EA.

I observed that the environmental effects disclosed in Chapter 3 for many resource topics did not vary by alternative or only in minor ways and that the intensity of the predicted effects may be limited in time or extent or minimal altogether. Because of this, those resource issues influenced my decision in minor ways and are not discussed in detail.

Fisheries Habitat in Little Phillips Creek

Alternatives were developed to fully display the potential effects and trade-off associated with the fuel and danger tree removal to fisheries habitat and PACFISH Riparian Objectives. Initial review indicated that the perennial portion of Little Phillips Creek had the highest concerns because of year round redband trout. The presence of Highway 204 in the stream channel and riparian corridor complicated management treatments and concerns. Road maintenance actions along Highway 204 impact riparian objectives such that many of them could not be met and stress fish within this reach. Alternative B focused fuel reduction and stand density treatments all the way to the highway along the perennial portion of the stream. Alternative C extended the amount of riparian area treated along Highway 204, proposing danger tree harvest and removal in the perennial portion of the stream and stocking level treatments to the road in the intermittent portions where the stream was between the treatment unit and the road. Alternative D only proposed cutting and leaving danger trees in the RHCA, no other harvest would occur and as with the other alternatives small fuels would be treated by hand pile and burning. The alternatives clearly displayed a range of impacts and trade-offs. I choose to implement Alternative C with modification to how danger trees would be treated in the perennial portion of the stream, where the stream is between the highway and the unit. By cutting and leaving danger trees without stand density treatments, impacts to fish and habitat would be reduced and the existing stand would continue to provide future riparian function needs. The reduced removal lowered impacts to fish such that the amount of time spent near the stream is reduced and the only

direct stream impacts would be associated with the placement of large wood in the stream or the removal of the occasional pieces that would threaten damage to the highway.

Loss of Canopy Cover from Big Game and future understory development as well as loss of Old Forest structure:
Alternative D reduces the amount of harvest by dropping units where stocking level control was the primary reason for treatment. The alternative has developed to treat only those stands identified for fuels objectives in support of the Union County Wildlfire Protection Plan. The reduced harvest did not show a major difference in effects to big game or loss of old structure. None of the alternatives propose harvest or fuel treatments in old forest stands. Alternative B proposes 20 acres of improvement harvest in a stand identified in an old forest connective corridor. Old forest values would be retained in this unit because no tree 21 inches or larger would be cut. Neither Alternative C nor D proposes harvest in stands identified for old forest connective corridors. None of the alternatives would cut trees greater than or equal to 21 inches for harvest, except for an occasional danger tree.

The alternatives to the proposed action were developed to retain more cover for big game. Alternative B has the largest change in total cover while Alternative D has the least. Both alternative B and C remove the same about of satisfactory cover, bringing Forest Plan Management Area E2 to the minimum forest plan standard for satisfactory cover. Total cover is higher in Alterative C by 4 percent. HEI shows no change between alternatives. I selected Alternative C because it treated the most acres for fuel and stocking treatments while being in the middle of the range for cover loss and not change HEI. Total cover would remain well above the forest plan minimum standard of 30 percent. The stand treatments are uneven aged management prescriptions with the impacts to cover being short term; stands moving from cover to forage would likely become marginal cover in 10 years. I believe the modification made to Alternative C to cut and leave danger trees in the perennial portion of Little Phillips Creek is best for protection of fisheries habitat. Fish in this section of stream are stressed because of the highway and associated road maintenance needs. This decision would allow large wood to remain in the RHCA in an area where it could contribute to riparian function because the stream is between the road and treatment unit. Where possible, large wood will be left or placed in the stream channel for fisheries habitat needs when it would not cause damage to the highway or be a hazard to traffic. No stocking level harvest would occur in the perennial portion of the RHCA. The hand fuel treatments in this portion of the RHCA would reduce the risk of fire moving into the crown by piling and burning small surface and ladder fuels.

Undeveloped Character

There was concern that harvest and associated road building may affect potential wilderness characteristics within areas some public considered to be “areas of undeveloped character”. My decision will not enter inventoried roadless areas. There are four units that lie within the area identified as “undeveloped”. All units, and the surrounding area, have had past harvest activities. Stumps and other evidence of logging such as skid trails are substantially recognizable to the forest visitor. Based on this, this area is not consistent with the inventory criteria for potential wilderness and would not qualify for, or be placed on, the potential wilderness inventory (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70). Therefore, harvest within these units would not change the areas potential for future wilderness designation.

Climate Change

NEPA regulations, found in 40 CFR 1502.22, require the agency to acknowledge incomplete information. Addressing issues raised during the comment period required the Interdisciplinary Team to deal with gaps in scientific knowledge. Uncertainties in managing for climate change, in total, are clearly too large and diverse to support choosing a single approach above the other. The inherent complexity of the Pacific Northwest region suggests that site-specific management is particularly important, and that one-size fits-all suggestions

are not likely to work. It is clear that the dynamics of forest growth under different silvicultural practices indicates that sustainably managed forest projects can sequester more carbon over time than unmanaged forests. This is due to a higher rate of forest growth, providing net sequestration benefits that are additional to that of unmanaged forests. (Ruddell et al. 2007). All action alternatives, propose to commercially and non-commercially harvest trees from overstocked areas to maximize forest health, thereby, sequestering more carbon by increasing tree growth in the residual stand. Any attempt to place this project in the context of global warming would have to focus on portions related to carbon fixing and storage. The scale of this action will likely be immeasurable when considered at a global scale.

Alternatives Considered

The EA considered four alternatives in detail, including the no action. Alternatives B and C include a forest plan amendment to allow the use of a timber sale to remove trees from the Little Phillips Creek RHCA, allow silvicultural practices in the RHCA to improve public and fire fighter safety, and allow the use of various fuel treatment practices to manage for desired fire conditions for effective suppression efforts. A detailed description and comparison of all alternatives, including three alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study, can be found in Chapter 2 of the EA, pages 13 - 39.

All action alternatives would accomplish all or portions of the purpose and need described in Chapter 1 and incorporate design features that protect various resource values described in Chapter 2. The forest plan amendment for alternatives B and C is described on pages 15 - 16, and 24 of the EA. The alternatives to the proposed action are responsive to significant issues raised during scoping and the Interdisciplinary team. Table 2, following the alternative descriptions, summarizes the outcomes and activities of each alternative.

Alternative A – No Action

Alternative A represents the existing situation, uses, and environmental processes. No new management actions would take place. Current management direction and existing activities, fire protection, and road maintenance would continue. Current biological and physical processes creating stand disturbance and changes would be allowed to continue. Current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. (EA page 14)

Alternative B – Proposed Action

Alternative B would involve the removal of commercial timber suitable for lumber or wood fiber, reducing the density of non-commercial size trees, and reducing existing and activity generated surface fuels, down and standing woody debris, and aerial fuels. Commercial timber would be removed using helicopter or skyline, and cut-to-length logging systems. The biomass component would remove non-sawlog material down to 3 inches small end diameter. Non-commercial size material and surface fuels would be reduced using prescribed fire, hand thinning, mastication or grapple piling followed by the burning of the piles. No green trees larger than 21 inches in diameter will be removed. The treatments would favor early seral tree species (ponderosa pine and western larch) and maintain fuel condition characteristics that would result in surface fires that burn with an intensity that would allow safe and successful suppression actions to be taken. There would be a need for a 1,800 foot temporary road to access Unit 27 and 28 reducing the amount of forwarder routes and decking areas within the Gordon Creek RHCA. FR 3725038 will need a temporary culvert installed to access Unit 26. (EA pages 14 - 23) Upon further field review, unit 36 has been dropped to protect an extensive network of riparian habitat.

Alternative C –Forest health without activities in Late Old Structure

This alternative is the same as Alternative B except for the following (EA pages 24 - 28):

- Unit 4B has been dropped in order to retain large tree habitat for wildlife.

- Unit 8C has reduced in size and had its prescription changed from a 'patch cut' to an 'improvement cut'.
- Unit 17 prescription changed from 'commercial thinning' to an 'improvement cut'.
- Unit 39 is now 82 acres. Upon further field inspection it was deemed that the eastern portion of the unit's fuel loads do not need treatment at this time.
- Unit 42 has increased in size to 489 acres and now includes the eastside of the Hwy. 204 corridor. In response to scoping comments requesting that the project be reevaluated for more possible treatment acres, the IDT identified the need to treat fuels and danger trees along the eastern side of the Highway 204 corridor.
- RHCA along Hwy. 204 corridor will receive fuels and danger tree removal.
    - Silvicultural treatments to reduce crown density in the RHCA of Little Phillips Creek would only occur along sections of the units where Little Phillips Creek is located on the opposite side (westside) of Hwy. 204, away from the activity units (37 & 42).
    - Where Little Phillips Creek is between the road and the unit, only danger trees will be cut in the RHCA. Danger trees would be felled and left in portions of streams where large wood can safely be left and not risk damage to the road or traffic. Trees or pieces of trees between the highway and the stream would be removed where they pose a danger for vehicle collisions. Natural and activity generated surface fuels inside the RHCA would be hand piled and burned. See also Design Features for Fisheries.

Alternative D – Forest health without activities in lynx habitat

In this action alternative, only units with a primary focus towards fuel reductions would be treated. All other units, those focusing on stand density and structure, were dropped. Since this alternative also focuses treatment along Highway 204 it is a modification of Alternative C as described below: (EA pages 28 - 30)

- No harvest entry would be made into the PACFISH defined RHCA of Little Phillips Creek. Danger trees would be cut and left within the RHCA. Trees or pieces of trees adjacent to the highway would be removed where they pose a danger for vehicle collisions.
- The removal of the RHCA for harvest options from Unit 36 reduced it to 4.8 acres. This unit would be combined with Unit 37. Unit 37 became 96 acres after being reduced for the RHCA along Little Phillips Creek and adding the few acres left from Unit 36.
- No temporary road construction would be needed.

Table 2: Comparison of Alternatives

Activities	Alternatives			
	A	B	C	D
Total Harvest (gross acres)	0	2,075	2,216	1,195
Total Harvest (net acres)	0	1,924	2,166	1,195
Commercial Thin – acres	0	484	272	216
Improvement cut – acres	0	1,245	1,749	859
Salvage- acres	0	120	120	120
Patch cut – acres	0	75	25	0
Total Fuel Treatments (acres)	0	2,075	2,216	1,195
Mechanical fuel treatment (acres)	0	1,610	1,750	750
Maintenance (miles)	0	42.5	41	22.3
Temporary road construction (miles)	0	0.34	0.34	0
Closed road opened temporarily (miles)	0	19.03	17.2	11.1
surface rock Replacement (miles)	0	13.9	13.9	6.5
Road brushing (miles)	0	24.9	23.4	15.3
Culverts replaced (number)	0	0	0	0
Temporary Culverts to open roads (number)	0	1	1	0

Public Involvement

Public scoping began May 25, 2007 with mailing a proposed action to 115 individuals, groups, agencies, organizations, and tribal governments. The District met with the CTUIR on two occasions, including a field trip to visit the area, EA pages 6 to 8. The District received two written responses. A discussion of issues raised during scoping is included in Chapter 1 of the EA. Issues raised during public scoping were used to develop alternatives along with concerns voiced by Forest Service specialists. On February 22, 2008, the District began the 30-day comment period consistent with regulations issued June 4, 2003, CFR 215.3 and 215.5. An initial analysis and identification of the preferred alternative was provided for the comment period which included a Forest Plan amendment. The District received comments from four organizations; neither of the tribes responded. The comments and resource concerns have helped the District refine the analysis presented in this EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact

My determination of significance is based on careful consideration of the EA and project file as compared to the context and intensity factors listed in 40 CFR 1508.27.

Context

The actions included in the selected alternative are described in Chapter 2 of the EA. The disclosure of effects differs by the resource of concern with the scale of analysis often extending beyond the Planning Area to cover complete subwatersheds or other geographic area comprising the ecological unit needed for a complete look at impacts. Multiple scales and levels of analysis were used to determine the significance of the actions' effects on the human environment. The overall planning area for the Loon EA included about 20,180 acres. The selected alternative included vegetation modification activities on 2,961 acres, about 15 percent of the planning area. Activities were designed to improve ecosystem function and resilience to natural disturbance by moving stocking levels, species composition, forest structure, and fuel loads toward their desired fire behavior within the Palmer Valley Wildland Urban Interface to provide safe and effective fire suppression efforts. Water qualities and flows would not be measurably impacted. Wildlife and its habitat, soil stability and productivity, and fisheries habitat would also be affected. The impacts of the selected alternative on each of these are disclosed in the EA

(Chapter 3). The analyses also found that the activity may affect but not likely to adversely effect any listed fish species or critical fish habitat because of a short section of FR 6300 adjacent to Little Lookingglass and Lookinggalss Creeks. The analysis also determined that the activity in Little Phillips Creek may affect not likely adversely affect steelhead trout. Based on the analysis and the extent of potential effects this project is local in scope and does not extend beyond the Forest boundary. It results in improved safety along both federal and state roads by removing danger trees, improves the ability to confine the size and spread of a wildfire, and increases the ability of a three person engine crew to take safe and effective suppression efforts along the ridgetops and Highway 204.

Intensity

The environmental effects of the following actions are documented in Chapter 3 of the Environmental Assessment: commercial harvest of trees; tree planting; reduction of fuels by mastication, underburning, hand pile and jackpot burning, temporary road construction and decommissioning, installation of a temporary culvert and temporary use of roads designated closed in the Access and Travel Management Plan. The beneficial and adverse direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts discussed in the EA have been disclosed within the appropriate context and effects are expected to be low in intensity because of project design, including Project Design Features (EA pages 30 to 37) developed to protect or reduce impacts to resources. Significant effects to the human environment are not expected. The rationale for the determination of significance is based on the environmental assessment, in light of the factors listed below:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1))

The interdisciplinary team analyzed and disclosed the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the actions on ecosystems and diversity (pages 91 - 96), wildlife habitat (pages 73 - 91), soils (pages 49 - 52), water (pages 52 - 62), riparian and fish Habitat (pages 63 - 72), fire and fuels (pages 42 - 47), air quality (pages 47 - 49), range (pages 105 - 106), transportation (pages 104 - 105), timber (pages 100 - 104), visual quality (pages 99 - 100), and pest management (pages 97 - 98).

The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative included the following:

Finding from the Analysis	EA Section
There would be a short-term increase in fine fuels and small fuels as a result of timber harvest. Slash reduction treatments include mastication and burning that would bring fuel loads to desired conditions as defined for Fuel Model 8. These reductions would reduce starts and help to successfully suppress wildfire or alter fuel concentrations to aid in controlling the size and spread of future wildfires.	Fire/Fuels Section
The removal of small diameter trees and reduction in stand density would decrease crown density and reduce the risk of fire moving into the crowns.	Fire/Fuels Section
The project may slightly increase the amount of acres within the planning area with detrimental soil conditions, however all activity units are consistent with the Forest Plan.	Soils section
Past results using in-woods processors (including the cut-to-length systems using forwarders) have been quite favorable. The slash mats spread compressive forces while little to no displacement occurs, as there are minimal turning forces or dragging of trees to cause mixing of surface soil. Landings often overlap existing roads thereby limiting additional impacts.	Soils section
Exposed soil from prescribed fire would be scattered in a mosaic pattern and rarely in continuous areas that could become an erosion hazard. Forest Plan standards and guidelines would be met; there would be no measurable impacts to soil productivity.	Soils section
Impacts causing detrimental soil conditions from the construction and decommissioning of a temporary road for access to Unit 27 and 28 would be short-term and not increase detrimental soil conditions to a level of concern.	Soils section
Other than in Little Phillips Creek, the proposed activities will not increase stream temperatures because entries would not occur in RHCAs or are distant to perennial portions of streams. The cutting of danger trees would reduce crown closure along portions of streams but not enough to cause measurable changes to stream temperatures.	Water Quality section

Finding from the Analysis	EA Section
Inputs of sediment into streams from the action would be immeasurable. With the exception of log haul and danger tree and stocking level reductions in Little Phillips Creek, entry into RHCAs would not occur. A short stretch of Forest Road 63 would be a source of sediment during wet weather haul and the removal or placement of large wood in Little Phillips Creek would also be a source of sediment because of disturbance next to the channel or the large wood becoming a part of the channel. These two locations would have immeasurable inputs of sediment.	Water Quality section
The temporary culvert could cause turbid water to reach fisheries habitat, however the deposition of sediment would be confined to the immediate area of the culvert.	Water Quality section
With this magnitude of treatment, it is unlikely that private actions would combine with the proposed project to measurably change water yield or peak flows of the streams in the analysis area as they leave the National Forest System.	Water Quality section
This project would not measurably add chemical contaminants and nutrients to the stream systems or cause degradation of habitat. There are no other sources of contamination that would causes cumulative effects.	Riparian/Fish section
Other than in Little Phillips Creek, any sediment delivery caused by the action is not expected to significantly alter the sediment flux, substrate imbeddedness would be unchanged. Actions in Little Phillips Creek would occur in the spring when flows are high to allow fish to move away from disturbances. Stream flows should be enough to keep spawning gravels clear though fish may be disturbed from spawning. The disturbance would be short-term; lasting a day or less and not expected in impact fish populations or viability.	Riparian/Fish section
Other than in Little Phillips Creek the proposed activities will not alter pool frequency. In Little Phillips Creek pool frequency would be increased by placement of large wood in portions of the stream where they not cause road damage or a concern for public safety.	Riparian/Fish section
No subwatershed surpasses 15 percent ETA (Equivalent Treatment Area, this is the same as equivalent clearcut area) and would not be expected to cause detectable changes in water yield or to peak or base flows.	Riparian/Fish section
The proposed thinning, improvement cuts, and group sections increases the amount of old forest single story in moist forest by removing understory vegetation from stands current typed as understory re-initiation. There would be no change to dry forest.	Ecosystem and Diversity section
The reduction in stand stocking levels would allow faster growth and would increase resilience. The reduced fuel structure would help protect large trees from wildfires. Vigor of the remaining trees would increase, reducing the risk of mortality from insect epidemics.	Timber section
Some satisfactory cover in Management Area E2 will be converted to marginal cover and some marginal cover covered to forage. The action would reduce satisfactory cover to 10 percent, the forest plan minimum standard however total cover would be 48 percent, well above the forest plan standard of 30 percent. HEI would be 57 percent, also well above the Forest Plan standard of 45 percent.	Wildlife section
There would be little change in big game population.	Wildlife section
Cumulatively the effects of proposed activities in combination with other existing and potential future effects are not expected to negatively impact Rocky Mountain elk and other big game species.	Wildlife section
Silvicultural treatments designed to promote the development of LOS habitat with a snag and down wood component are expected to improve habitat for cavity dependent species. Fuels treatments would remove some existing dead and down wood habitat in order to reduce the fuel loading in strategic areas. Hazard tree removal would also reduce standing dead trees. The estimated snag density in both the $\geq$10-inch diameter group and the $\geq$20-inch diameter group would be reduced by less than one percent in both dry forest and moist forest at the watershed scale. Very little measurable difference can be shown between the alternatives because a small amount of the landscape is proposed for treatment in all cases, and overall snags are plentiful in the watersheds.	Wildlife section
While no loss of Old Forest stands are expected, wildlife species currently using these stands would be affected by the treatments to varying degrees. Existing habitat for some species such as the northern goshawk, pileated woodpecker, and some neotropical migratory birds would be affected to a small degree simply because of stand disturbance and changes in microhabitats. Connectivity in thinned stands would remain functional and allow the free movement of old-growth-dependent wildlife. Treating these stands would benefit connectivity in the long-term by creating healthier conditions for tree development and growth.	Wildlife section

While the EA discloses short-term and minor deviations from the existing conditions, in my experience with similar projects, none of these effects have been found to be significant. All proposed activities would result in conditions consistent with direction found in the Forest Plan.

2. Effects to public health and safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)2)).

Project design features (EA, pages 30 - 37), including best management practices (Appendix E, pages 127 -131), will reduce impacts to acceptable levels. Beneficial uses of water are described in the EA, page 53. The analysis determined the projects to be compatible with the findings and recommendations of the Upper Grande Ronde River Subbasin Total Maximum Daily Load and Water Quality Management Plan (EA, pages 54 - 55; 109 - 110). Beneficial uses would not be impacted within or downstream of the planning area. Past experience has shown that air quality declines are limited in scope to the general burn area and are of short duration (EA pages 46 - 48. Prescribed fires will occur at times when the air is unstable and smoke can mix with the upper atmosphere. Monitoring by EPA for PM10 particles has shown thresholds of health concerns are not reached during periods of wildfires or prescribed fire (EA, page 47). Road maintenance and danger tree removal will provide for increased public safety on roads because of the improved surface and reduced hazards (EA, page 104). Increased fire fighter and public safety will result from reducing wildfire intensity and severity. The combined harvest and surface fuel treatments would lower the intensity and rate of spread of wildfires allowing for safer and more effective control measures to be taken in and near the WUI (EA, page 46).

3. Effects to unique characteristics of the geographic area (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)).

Avoidance measures will be implemented to protect Cultural Resources. Past surveys covered the areas proposed for activity recording forty-eight sites of which nineteen are considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and will be protected from activities associated with the project. There would be no effect to any cultural property (EA, page 106). No activities are proposed in Inventoried Roadless (EA, pages 10 - 11). The project will not impact wetlands or floodplains (EA, page 109).

4. Effects on the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

There are differing opinions within the local area on the importance or role fire disturbance and timber harvest should play in the ecosystem. The level of controversy or interest in what course of action to take regarding the use of timber harvest and prescribed fire to achieve desired conditions in the Forest Plan and the purpose and need for this project are not the focus of this criterion, rather the degree of controversy over the effects disclosed in the analysis.

Cutting of 21" dbh trees. Other than occasional danger trees, the action will not cut or remove green trees greater than or equal to 21 inches dbh.

No significant disagreements have been identified with the disclosure of effects in the EA or public comments. While some commenter's disagreed with the conclusion that a combination of prescribed fire and timber harvest would help move the existing vegetative conditions closer to desired conditions listed in the Forest Plan and the purpose and need; the reasons for this difference are based on opinions, not with the disclosure of effects. Although there is controversy and disagreement among the public over the potential for significant effects from a project of this size, the professional experts and scientific research consulted agree that the activities can be implemented without significant adverse effects on the environment. All actions meet Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines (EA, pages 111 - 112). Concerns voiced during scoping are listed and responded to in Chapter 4 of the EA.

5. Effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain, or involve unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.28(b)(5)).

My decision will not impose any highly uncertain, unique, or unknown environmental risks. Thinning, harvest, mechanical fuel treatment, prescribed fire and tree planting have been implemented successfully on the Umatilla National Forest in the past, meeting regulations concerning these activities and protecting National Forest resources. Past monitoring and experience with these types of activities has shown that the effects disclosed in the EA are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. Recent monitoring has found that Best Management Practices for protecting soil and water resources are effective in keeping detrimental impacts to within Forest Plan standards and in compliance with the Clean Water Act.

6. Establishment of a precedent for future actions with significant effects or implication of a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

Harvest is not a new activity within this analysis area and the proposed fuel treatments have occurred in numerous parts of the Umatilla National Forest. The Forest Plan allows harvest, thinning, planting, and various types of fuel treatments in this area. The EA effectively addressed and analyzed all major issues associated with the project. While maintaining desired fire behavior on the landscape would require future treatments that future decision is not dependent or required because of the current decision to treat fuels. The Forest Plan amendment for the use of a timber sale to remove hazard trees and fuels in the Little Phillips RHCA would allow future actions to proceed after additional analysis.

7. Relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).

Page 41 lists existing permits, contracts, and uses both within and adjacent to the planning area, along with reasonably foreseeable future projects. These actions were considered when the cumulative effects for various resources were discussed in Chapter 3. Past actions were also included when analyzing the impacts to water quality, through the use of equivalent treatment acres (ETA); big game with HEI and cover to forage ratios and by estimating the residual detrimental soil condition from past ground based skidding when determining the existing condition. Private lands below the Forest boundary were also considered in determining cumulative effects. The analysis did not indicate significant cumulative effects. Forest standards and guidelines would be met and the activity on the Forest would not cause measurable impacts below the Forest boundary.

8. Effects to resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources (40 CFR 1508,27(b)(8)).

The planning area has been surveyed and cultural sites were inventoried. Forty-eight sites have been recorded of which nineteen are considered potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places These sites and any sites found later will be protected by avoidance. If any artifacts or sites should be discovered during project implementation, the North Zone Archeologist will be notified and the area will be protected from disturbance until a determination can be made. No activities will occur on known sites (EA, page 106). The Forest Plan has not designated any Research National Areas in the planning area.

9. The LOON FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT would not adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

The selected alternative would conserve endangered, threatened, and sensitive species and their habitats as required under the Endangered Species Act and Regional guidelines for sensitive species. There are no unique or isolated populations of wildlife or plants (EA, pages 72 - 73, 87 - 90, 96 - 97, 107 - 109; and Biological Evaluations for aquatic, terrestrial, and plant species in the Analysis File). The action alternatives will not adversely affect essential chinook salmon habitat. The project has been determined to "may affect not likely to adversely affect" Columbia River bull trout and Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon and "may affect not likely to adversely affect" Snake River steelhead. The project has been consulted and the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service concur with the findings. The project includes a Forest Plan Amendment for danger tree and fuel reduction activities in the Little Phillips RHCA using a timber sale.

10. The Loon Fuels Reduction Project does not threaten a violation of Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10))

The project complies with the USFWS Director's order #131 related to applicability of the MBTA to federal agencies and requirements for permits for "take" and E.O. 13186. There are no wetlands (EA, page 109). The project is in compliance with the Clean Water Act (EA, page 109 to 110). Water quality is protected by project design (EA, page 31), using low soil disturbance logging systems (EA, page 34), and BMPs (EA, Appendix E). The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (EA, pages 106 - 114). The action is consistent with the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (EA, pages 111 to 112). The Forest Plan amendment does not violate any Federal, State, or Local laws.

Finding

On the basis of the information and analysis contained in the EA as disclosed above, it is my determination that implementation of my selected alternative does not constitute a major Federal Action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

NFMA and Forest Plan Consistency

This decision to reduce surface and aerial fuels and stocking levels using timber harvest and other methods is consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan's long term goals and objectives. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines for soils, wildlife habitat, riparian and fisheries habitat, timber, ecosystems and diversity, water, soils, fire and fuels, air quality, pest management, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, visual resources, and management area guidelines (Land and Resource Management Plan, pages 4-47 to 4-195).

The proposed thinning and danger tree removal in the Little Phillips Creek RHCA will be consistent with the amended Forest Plan. The amendment is needed to allow a timber sale contract to remove danger trees and reduce stocking levels to reduce crown closures. These activities would be mitigated so they will not cause detrimental changes in riparian areas (EA pages 15, 16, and 30 and 31). Soil and water would be conserved through project design and mitigation (EA pages 15 and 16, 34, and Appendix E), consistent with Forest Plan Amendment #10 PACFISH (EA pages 15 and 16, 111 - 113). The selected alternative would also be consistent with the Regional Forester's Forest Plan Amendment, also know as the "Eastside Screens" (EA page 111).

In accordance with 36 CFR 219.27, I conclude from the results of site-specific analysis documented in the EA and analysis file that timber harvest would only occur on those lands identified in the Forest Plan as suitable for timber production (EA pages 100 to 104, 113). The selected alternative is consistent with the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, Record of Decision, the accompanying Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 1990), dated June 11, 1990.

Finding of Non-Significant Amendment

This amendment will be made under the 2008 Forest Service planning regulation (36 CFR 219) which allow plan amendments to be made using the procedures from the 1982 planning regulations during the three-year transition period (36 CFR 219.14(b) (2). This amendment is being made using the 1982 procedures.

Forest Service Land and Resource Management Planning Manual (FSM 1900, Chapter 1920, Section 1926.51) lists four factors to be used when determining whether a proposed change to a Forest Plan is significant or not significant. The four factors are:

1. Actions that do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.
2. Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when adjustment do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management.
3. Minor changes in standards and guidelines.
4. Opportunities for additional projects or activities that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription.

Actions do not significantly alter the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management. This forest plan amendment is for establishing vegetation management objectives and how projects can be implemented in the Little Phillips Creek RHCA only. The amendment would not change or effect multiple-use goals and objectives in this RHCA. Current actions would not be impacted by the change in PACFISH standards and guidelines; the amendment is specific to danger tree removal and fuel reduction treatments. Current activities are listed on EA page 41 and none of them occur within the Little Phillips Creek RHCA. The amendment does not restrict these actions from happening; however the location of Little Phillips Creek next to the highway, in a narrow canyon, would limit these actions on its own. The amendment allows flexibility in how treatments can be implemented and makes riparian goals compatible with on going road maintenance activities. Even though the focus of vegetation management would not be for maintaining PACFISH riparian objectives it would look for places where large wood and other riparian objectives could be met where they would not cause damage to the road or become a hazard to traffic. Fisheries habitat in the upper perennial reaches Little Phillips Creek, where opportunities for improvement is greatest, can be improved. The middle and lower intermittent reaches have been channelized by the road and would continually be impacted by road maintenance, including winter sanding. When an activity, such as danger tree removal and placement of large wood into the stream occurs, fish would be impacted for a short time and project design features would protect the fish. Allowing a timber sale to remove danger trees and perform stocking level control in the RHCA for fuels reduction would not impact the viability of fish in the stream. The stream would still provide productive fisheries habitat compatible with the highway's use. The amendment recognizes the impacts of the highway in limiting the attainment of PACFISH RMOs such that a vegetation management focus on RMOs is not reasonable or compatible as long as the highway is being used. The danger tree removal and fuel treatments would not have long-term impacts to multiple use goals and objectives because they are compatible with current use of the riparian area and provide for fisheries habitat consideration where they can be safely accomplished.

Adjustments of management area boundaries or management prescriptions resulting from further on-site analysis when the adjustments do not cause significant changes in the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management. This amendment does not change any management area boundaries or prescriptions. PACFISH RHCAs will remain as currently defined in the Forest Plan. The amendment makes additions to PACFISH Standards and Guidelines which is discussed below. The standard and guideline changes will not change the multiple-use goals and objectives for long-term land and resource management of the Little Phillips Creek RHCA. The focus for fisheries habitat will remain but in a way more compatible with current highway use, maintenance, and impacts to the riparian habitat. It allows the use of timber sale contracts to accomplish traffic and wildfire management objectives within the RHCA.

Minor changes in standards and guidelines are proposed. This addition to the PACFISH standards and Guidelines is for Little Phillips Creek only. The 5.5 miles of Little Phillips Creek adjacent to Highway 204 is a very small portion of the total miles of PACFISH riparian areas on the forest, less than 0.1 percent. The amendment recognizes the impacts of Highway 204 on Little Phillips Creek and the ability to meet RMOs along the total length of the stream. Where year round fisheries habitat occurs, RMOs are encouraged to be met where they do not pose a safety risk to traffic or could damage the road. Where the stream has been channelized by the road and the road is between the unit and the road portions of the riparian area would not provide wood or other riparian functions; management of fuels and overstory would occur in the RHCA for protection of the Palmer Valley WUI. The amendment for Little Phillips Creek adds two other objectives for the riparian area, one is to provide safe traffic and highway conditions through the removal of danger trees and the other is to reduce fuels in a area needed for an escape route and for protection of wildland urban interfaces identified in the Union County CWPP. It also increases the flexibility of treatment options by allowing the use of a timber sale to cut and remove trees from the Little Phillips Creek RHCA. There would be no difference between the use of a service contract to removal trees and deck them for later sale and the removal using a timber contract. Efficiency is gained by using the timber sale when the expensive logging system is already in the area. Allowing the fuels and danger tree removal to become an objective in this riparian area would likely remove more trees than management for riparian functions alone, however crown closure would still be retained to allow trees to grown quicker. Canopy would once again close but would likely be followed by another treatment if surface and ladder fuels indicate a need. The loss in canopy is short-term, lasting ten to fifteen years and can contribute to future riparian values. The addition of objectives for public safety and fuel reductions supports the use of the highway as an escape route and would increase the ability of successful suppression efforts in the highway corridor, an area of high risk for starts. Blending the need for danger tree removal and fuel reduction with fisheries habitat provides minor changes in the ability to meet RMOs in an area heavily impacted by road use.

Opportunities for additional projects or activities that will contribute to achievement of the management prescription. The amendment provides opportunity for the continued maintenance of danger tree removal and fuel reduction in the future. The current project would reduce the need for another treatment for ten years. By that time the Umatilla National Forest Plan will be revised. The proposed danger tree cutting and limited removal included those trees that are both an eminent danger and likely to become a danger in 10 years. These trees would be cut in the next three years. If additional danger trees are identified after implementing this action they could be cut and removed by another timber sale decision or cut and left in place as currently permitted in PACFISH standards and guidelines. It is not likely that additional fuel treatments would be needed in the next 15 years unless areas along Highway 204 have treatments delayed.

Finding

On the basis of the information and analysis contained in the EA and all other information available as summarized above, it is my determination that adoption of the management direction reflected in my decision results in a non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Any written notice of appeal of the decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.14, "Appeal Content." The notice of appeal must be filed hard copy with the Appeal Deciding Officer, ATTN: 1570 APPEALS, 333 S.W. First Avenue, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon, 97208-3623, faxed to (503) 808-2255, sent electronically to appeals-pacificnorthwest-regional-office@fs.fed.us, or hand delivered to the above address between 7:45AM and 4:30PM, Monday through Friday except legal holidays. The appeal must be postmarked or delivered within 45 days of the date the legal notice announcing this decision in the East Oregonian Newspaper. The publication date of the legal notice in the East Oregonian Newspaper is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal and those wishing to appeal should not rely on dates or timeframes provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure their appeals are received in a timely manner. For electronically mailed appeals, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the appeal, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format or portable document format only. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above or in other formats than those listed or containing viruses will be rejected. Only individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period may appeal. This project may be implemented 50 days after this legal notice if no appeal is received. If an appeal is received the project may not be implemented for 15 days after the appeal decision.

For further information regarding these appeal procedures, contact the Forest Environmental Coordinator Janel McCurdy at 541-278-3869

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision contact Mike Rassbach, District Ranger, Walla Walla Ranger District, 1415 West Rose Street, Walla Walla WA, 99362. Phone Number is 509-522-6290. Or contact Janel McCurdy, Umatilla National Forest, 2517 SW Hailey Avenue, Pendleton, OR 97801, phone number is 541-278-3869 and E-mail janelmccurdy@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Kevin D. Martin *August 1, 2008*

KEVIN D. MARTIN Date
Forest Supervisor