# DECISION MEMO

## Steamboat Oak Habitat Improvement Project

U.S. Forest Service

McAdams Creek Drainage

Salmon/Scott River Ranger District

Siskiyou County, California

## BACKGROUND

This project is proposed in coordination with the CAL Fire Deadwood Inmate Camp. Deadwood crews have treated the fuels within the camp up to the Forest Service property boundary. Currently, fuel loading conditions on Forest Service lands adjacent to the camp boundary are untreated, decadent, and could result in hazardous conditions to fire fighters in the event of a wildfire. A significant portion of this parcel is oak woodland habitat, the condition of the oak stand is degraded due to severely departed fire return interval resulting in overstocked oak stands, conifer encroachment and decadent brush understory. There is an opportunity to reduce the threat of detrimental wild fire to the Deadwood Inmate Camp and restore and protect Oak woodland habitat with a relatively simple fuels reduction treatment.

## DECISION

I have decided to reduce the threat of detrimental wildfire to the Deadwood Inmate Camp and restore and protect Oak woodland habitat within the project area by reducing ground and latter fuels, cutting and piling understory trees and brush, followed by pile burning.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) This category of action is applicable because the following actions apply; thinning or brush control to improve growth or to reduce fire hazard(ii) Prescribed burning to reduce natural fuel build-up and improve plant vigor (iv).

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- No Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species will be adversely impacted by this action (see the Categorical Exclusion Checklist and supporting documentation located in the project record).
- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – None exist within the project area. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – None are present within the project area. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.

- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – None are present within the project area. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.
- Research natural areas – None are present within the project area. No extraordinary circumstances exist for this resource condition.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – None are present (See Archaeological Survey Report #R2018-05-05-2476-0)
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – One archaeological site is present within the project area, but will not be adversely affected by project implementation. See Archaeological Survey Report #R2018-05-05-2476-0.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Klamath National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis on March 30, 2018. Letters were mailed to adjacent landowners on May 7, 2018 initiating a 15 day scoping period for this project, no comments were received.

## FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### The National Forest Management Act

This decision is consistent with the National Forest Management Act as implemented by the Klamath Forest Plan. The project was designed to be consistent with the Klamath National Forest Land Management Plan.

### National Historic Preservation Act

All necessary steps have been taken to identify, record, and determine effects on historic properties and cultural resources within the project area of potential effect. A complete archaeological inventory of the proposed project area of potential effect did result in the location of one site within the project area. Heritage resources has recommended avoidance or limiting treatments within the site to hand thinning vegetation, and piling and burning outside of the site.

The archaeological survey report is compliant with the *Programmatic Agreement Among the U.S.D.A Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, California State Historic Preservation Officer, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Process for compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for Management of Historic Properties by the National Forests of the Pacific Southwest Region (*Regional Programmatic Agreement). There will be no adverse effects to districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources (see *Archaeological Survey Report* #R2018-05-05-2476-0). A no effect determination has been made for this project (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, J. Coats, Heritage Program,

7/19/2018).

## The Endangered Species Act

The project complies with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and Forest Service Policy (FSM 2670).

The project is not within the range of any federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed plant species. A field review has been conducted, and no potentially suitable habitat has been located (Categorical Exclusion Checklist – D. Carlson, Botanist, 6/5/2018).

No proposed, threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species or their habitats will be negatively affected with this proposed action (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, S. Cuenca, Wildlife Biologist, 6/21/2018).

There will be no direct or indirect impacts to any federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed aquatic species because (1) project activities are outside the distribution of species or species will not be present due to lack of water in stream channels when project activities occur; (2) There will be no ground disturbing activities; (3)Vegetation treatments will not affect effective shade or large woody debris presence/recruitment; (4) No overland sediment movement or other sediment-associated impacts to stream habitat will occur as a result of burning handpiles; and (5) No change in existing condition to aquatic habitat. (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, M. Meneks, 6/21/2018)

## Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The project complies with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act through compliance with the *Migratory Bird Memorandum of Understanding*; habitat for migratory birds will be maintained and long-term benefits are likely with enhancement of oak woodland habitat. The project will have no negative effects on migratory bird populations. (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, S. Cuenca, Wildlife Biologist, 6/21/2018)

## The Clean Water Act

Water quality protection depends on compliance with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives laid out in the Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the North Coast Water Quality Control Board 2015 Waiver (Waiver). Compliance with the Waiver is compliance with the Clean Water Act and Scott River TMDL. Being that no treatment is proposed within Riparian Reserves (intermittent streams on the NE and SE corners were surveyed and determined to be ephemeral; if treatment does not occur within 150' of McAdams Creek), there are no extraordinary circumstances related to hydrology or water quality. There will be no direct or indirect effects in the short or long term from the project. The project qualifies for Category A of the 2015 Waiver (Order No. R1-2015-0021) under #11, "timber harvest, fuel reduction, vegetation management, and understory or pile burning using hand crews

outside of Riparian Reserves where there is no risk of sediment delivery to watercourses." (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, C. Ester, Hydrologist, 6/5/2018).

### The Clean Air Act

Siskiyou County is identified as attainment or unclassified for carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur oxides (Sox), lead, respirable particulate matter (PM10) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) for both state and federal standards. There are no further state or federal regulations for activities that generate these emissions. Siskiyou County is in "non-attainment/transitional" status for the state 8-hour ozone standards. Therefore, compliance with the General Conformity Rule of the Clean Air Act for nitrogen oxides was addressed. The project will produce criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions from the exhaust of mobile sources. The emissions are not anticipated to exceed the General Conformity Rule *de minimis* values and will comply with all state and federal air quality regulations.

### Executive Order 12898 - Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 relating to environmental justice requires an assessment of whether implementation of this decision will disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations. This project will not disproportionately affect any minorities or low-income populations as it will benefit all community members near the treated areas equally.

### Executive Order 13112 - Noxious Weeds

Executive Order 13112, Forest Service Manual 2080, and the Forest Plan require that all projects be evaluated for the risk of noxious weed introduction and spread as a result of project activities. Spotted knapweed, a high priority noxious weed on the Forest, does exist within the project area. Due to the low amount of ground disturbance caused by implementation of the proposed activities, there is a low risk of spread. The Forest Noxious Weed Crew will monitor the project area after implementation to confirm that there is no spread into the treatment areas. Spotted knapweed would be treated by hand pulling methods from within the project area prior to, and after project implementation. In addition, there is a low risk of new noxious weed species being introduced into the project area as a result of project activities. (Categorical Exclusion Checklist, D. Carlson, Botanist, 6/5/2018)

## IMPLEMENTATION DATE

This decision is not subject to administrative review and may be immediately implemented pursuant to the conditions and requirements listed above.

## CONTACT

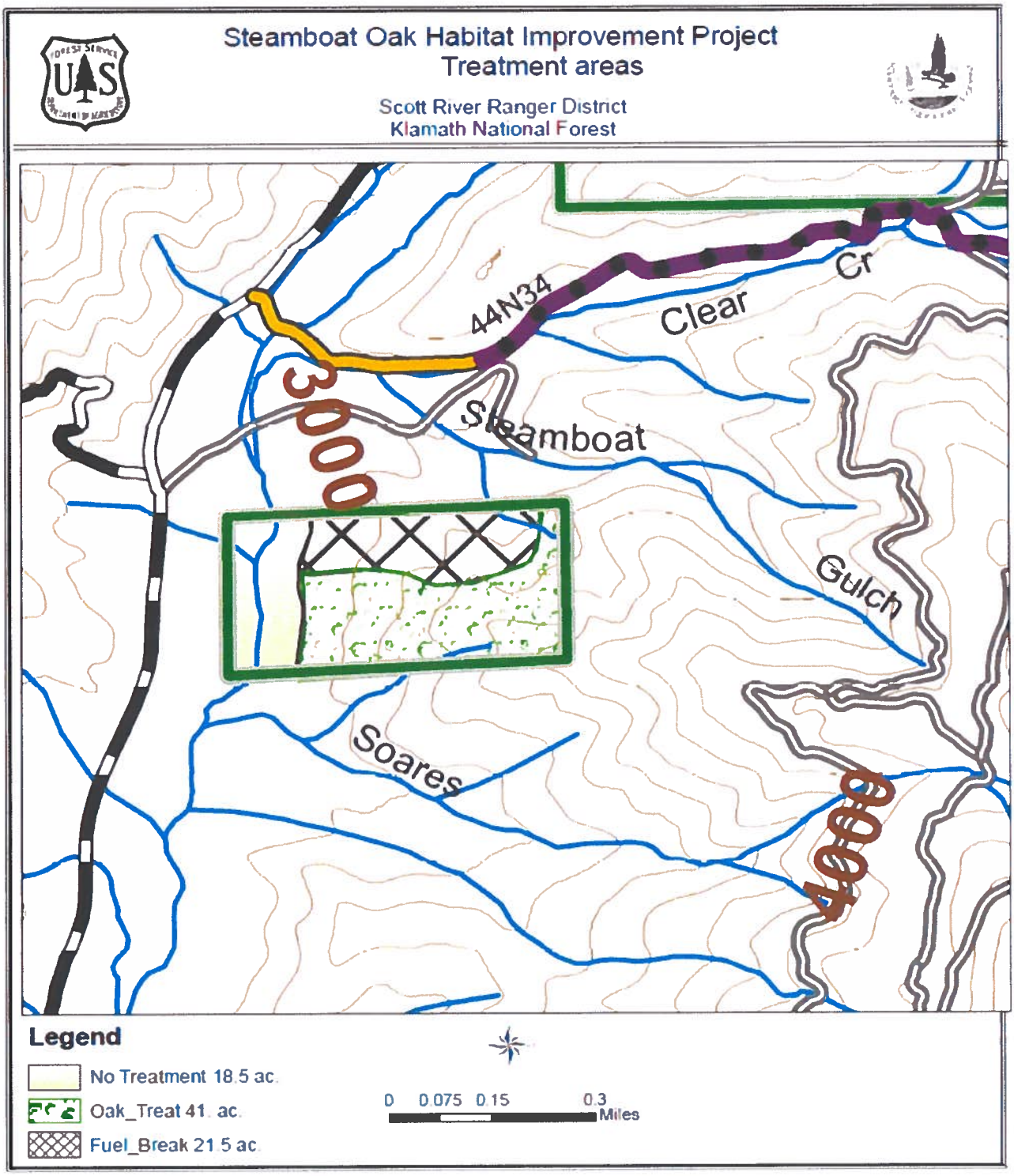
For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Ezekial Jones at (530) 468-1264, or by email at: ewjones@fs.fed.us.

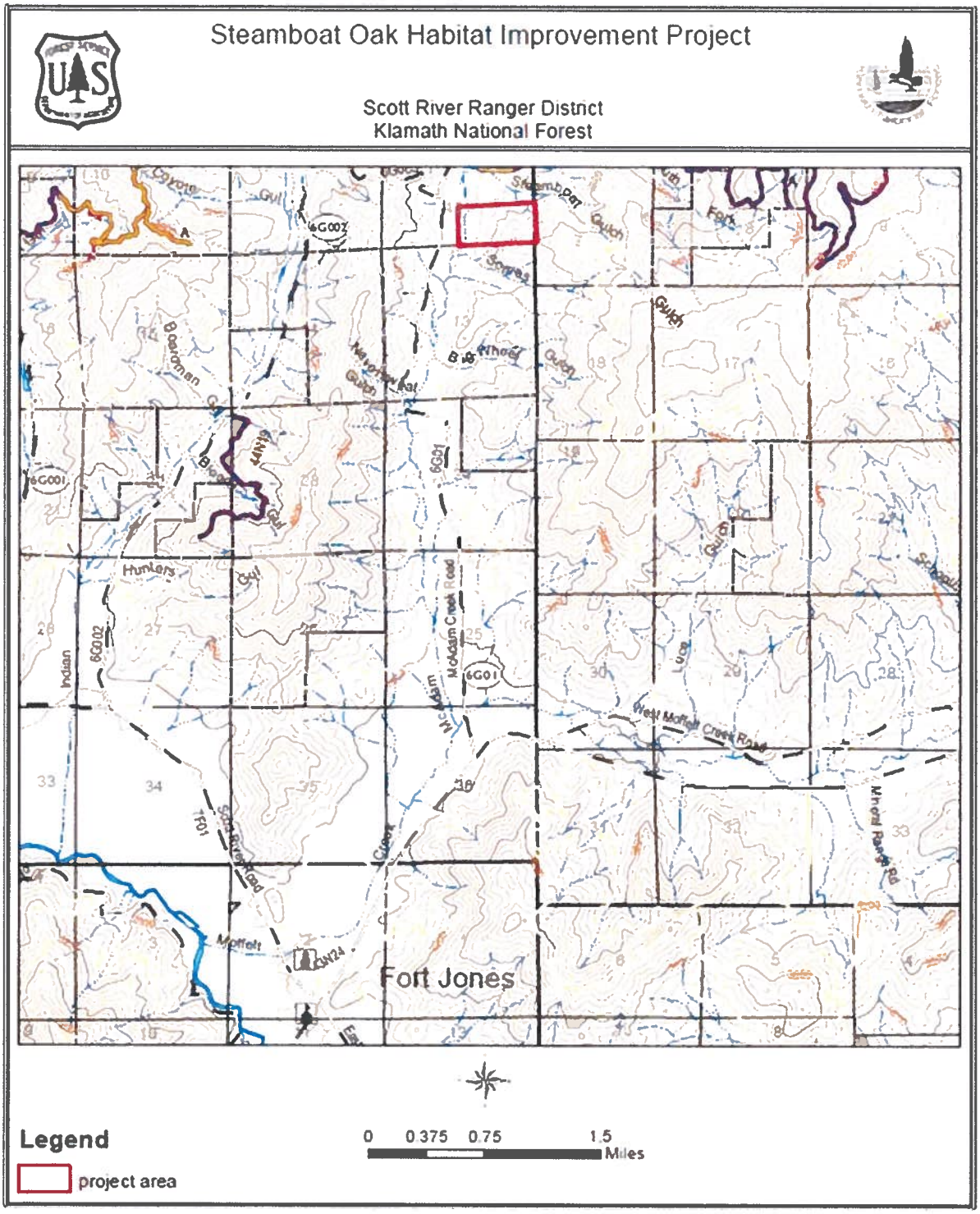
7/25/18

Ted McArthur

District Ranger

Date


Steamboat Oak Habitat Improvement Project
Treatment areas
Scott River Ranger District
Klamath National Forest
44N34
Clear
Cr
Steamboat
3000
Gulch
Soares
4000
Legend
No Treatment 18.5 ac.
Oak_Treat 41. ac.
Fuel_Break 21.5 ac.
0 0.075 0.15 0.3
Miles


Steamboat Oak Habitat Improvement Project
Scott River Ranger District
Klamath National Forest
Fort Jones
Legend
project area
0 0.375 0.75 1.5
Miles

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