

**Decision Record
for the
Norcross Spring Vegetation Treatments EA
(# OR 014-04-04)**

Decision

My decision is to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative 1), including all “Project Design Features” described in the Norcross Spring Vegetation Treatments Environmental Assessment (EA). This alternative will consist of the cutting of invasive juniper, seeding and planting of native vegetation, thinning of ponderosa pine stands, removal and utilization of ponderosa pine and juniper, and less than one mile of road construction.

Background

The Bureau of Land Management Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area (BLM), completed an EA that analyzed alternatives that proposed various treatments in the vicinity of Norcross Springs. The EA was developed by the Klamath Falls Resource Area Interdisciplinary Team based on the current conditions within the project area to meet the direction and objectives set forth in the Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The overall objectives of the proposed treatments are to (1) Reduce the extent and density of western juniper that has encroached into various ecological types, with the overall objective of reducing the effect of juniper encroachment on functions of the upland and riparian watershed, (2) Reduce fuel loads, (3) Restore the structure and composition of ponderosa pine stands that have been affected by fire suppression and (4) Monitor the effects of vegetation treatments on upland and riparian watershed function.

Public Involvement

One comment letter was received during the 30-day comment period for the Norcross EA. The main issues included:

1. Developing a less ecologically destructive alternative
2. Roadless Concerns
3. Road building within the project area
4. The BLM should reconsider juniper management
5. Thinning Effects on Forest Health
6. Thinning Effects on Fuels Reduction
7. Fire at the Landscape Scale
8. Fuels Management Concerns
9. Soils Concerns
10. Cumulative Effects (livestock grazing, juniper removal, and timber harvest)
11. Weeds
12. An EIS should be performed

All of these comments were closely reviewed and considered in my decision (see Decision Rationale below).

Decision Record – Norcross Spring Vegetation Treatments

Decision Rationale

The decision to implement Alternative 1, as proposed, meets the purpose and needs as identified in the Norcross Spring EA, furthers the implementation of the Klamath Falls RMP and addresses the recommendations for vegetation management identified in the Gerber-Willow Valley Watershed Analysis.

Alternative 2 is rejected because it does not meet the purpose and need of the EA and does not implement the RMP and does not consider recommendations of the Gerber – Willow Valley Watershed Analysis.

Based on the information in the Norcross Spring EA and public comments, I conclude that none of the alternatives analyzed constitutes a significant impact affecting the quality of the human environment greater than those addressed in the Final Klamath Falls Resource Area Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), September 1994, and other analysis documents. The cumulative effect of this decision combined with other actions for vegetation treatments fall within the range of effects analyzed in the RMP EIS. The BLM has determined that the proposed action will have no significant impacts. As such, in conjunction with this decision, I have signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

I have reviewed the public comments received and discussed them with Klamath Falls Interdisciplinary Specialists. The comments received did not provide any new information that would alter the overall conclusions for the analysis of potential impacts. While opinions expressed were valuable, they do not change the finding that there are no significant impacts. I believe this EA provides a thorough site-specific analysis of the proposed project and the potential impacts to affected species and habitats.

This decision is consistent with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Native American Religious Freedom Act and cultural resource management laws and regulations. It is also consistent with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and will not have any adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution per Executive Order 13212.

Consultation and Coordination

Consultation protocol with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was followed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. Species protected under the ESA were evaluated for potential impacts from the proposed project. A “No Effect” Determination was made for all Listed, Proposed, and Candidate species from the proposed project.

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be notified of the project in accordance with 36 CFR 805.5 (b). Cultural Resource surveys are currently being conducted as required by the by the Oregon BLM-SHPO protocol. All identified cultural resources will be avoided during project activities.

Administrative Remedies

A Notice of Decision will be published in the Klamath Falls Herald & News. That notice will meet the requirement for purposes of protests under 43 CFR subpart 5003 - Administrative Remedies, and will establish the date initiating the protest period. Protests of this decision must be filed within fifteen (15) days after publication of the Notice of Decision. Send protests to:

Manager
Klamath Falls Resource Area
2795 Anderson Avenue, Bldg. 25
Klamath Falls, OR 97603.

Protests should contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision. To be considered complete, a protest must contain, at a minimum:

1. the name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest,
2. a statement of the issue or issues being protested,
3. a statement of the parts of the specific EA being protested by referencing specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, maps, etc. included in the document,
4. a copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that you submitted during the planning process or a reference to the date the issue or issues were discussed by you for the record,
5. a concise statement explaining why the Resource Area Manager's decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite the planning documents, environmental analysis documents, and available planning records (for example, meeting minutes or summaries, or correspondence).

A protest that merely expresses disagreement with the Resource Area Manager's proposed decision, without any data, will not provide us with the benefit of your information and insight. In this case, the Field Manager's review will be based on the existing analysis and supporting data.

Before deciding to file a protest, I encourage you to please contact me to determine if your concerns might be met in some other way via a protest or to assist you in the protest process if it is appropriate.

In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR 5003.2 (a & c), the effective date of this decision is the date of publication of the Notice of Decision.

Thank you for your continued interest in the multiple use management of your public lands.



Jon Raby, Field Manager
Klamath Falls Resource Area

9/2/04
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
for the
Norcross Spring Vegetation Treatments Environmental Assessment
EA No. OR 014-04-04

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area, has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed alternatives to the proposal to conduct Salvage and thinning activities within the Klamath Falls Resource Area on BLM lands. The BLM has determined that the proposed actions will have no significant impacts.

The proposed actions in the vicinity of Gerber Reservoir include the removal of invasive juniper by mechanical and manual cutting, and thinning of ponderosa pine stands. The overall objectives of the proposed treatments are to (1) Reduce the extent and density of western juniper that has encroached into various ecological types, with the overall objective of reducing the effect of juniper encroachment on upland and riparian watershed functions, (2) Reduce fuel loads, (3) Restore the structure and composition of ponderosa pine stands that have been affected by fire suppression and (4) Monitor the effects of vegetation treatments on upland and riparian watershed function.

The project will contribute to meeting the Management Action/Direction and Objectives of the Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (June 2, 1995). Based on the information in the EA, and after review of public comments received on the EA, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitutes a significant impact affecting the quality of the human environment greater than those addressed in the:

- Final - Klamath Falls Resource Area Management Plan and EIS (Sept. 1994), and Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision (June 2, 1995).
- Klamath Falls Resource Area Fire Management EA #OR-014-94-09 (June 10, 1994).
- Klamath Falls Resource Area Integrated Weed Control Plan EA (July 21, 1993).
- Range Reform FEIS (August 1995).
- Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines For Livestock Management For Public Lands Administered By The Bureau Of Land Management In the State Of Oregon and Washington (August 12, 1997).
- Final Environmental Impact Statement, Vegetation Treatment On BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (1991).

In addition, the project is consistent with applicable scientific findings from the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project.

Based on my review I find that there will be no significant impact, individually or cumulatively, from implementing this project, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement, or a supplement to the existing RMP or Environmental Impact Statement, are not necessary and will not be prepared.

Signed 
Jon Raby, Field Manager
Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date 9/2/04