PROPOSED ACTION: The Chiloquin District Ranger is proposing to harvest down, root sprung, broken, and otherwise damaged trees and clean up associated fuels on approximately 230 acres on the east side of Yoss Ridge on the Chiloquin Ranger District. The incident that created the opportunity for this project was a localized wind event during the winter of 2003-2004. About 324 acres were affected by the blowdown event to some degree. This project proposes to treat the more concentrated areas of down and damaged trees. The legal location of the project is T32S, R9E, Sections 13 and 24, and T32S, R10E, Sections 7 and 8.

The project will include commercial salvage harvest (7” diameter at breast height (DBH) and larger) of a portion of the damaged or downed trees using ground based logging systems; treatment of the limbs, tops, and other fuels associated with the harvest operations by removal of tops to the landings and spot piling of slash in the units; and whipfalling, piling, and burning of non-commercial sized trees (under 7” DBH) that were damaged by the windstorm or by the falling larger trees. An estimated 1.5 million board feet (MMBF) of timber will be salvaged by this project. Previously existing snags and down logs, snap-off trees and their tops, and cull logs will be retained as snag and down log habitat. Snags that pose safety concerns will be felled and left in place for additional down log habitat.

SCOPING: The project was discussed with Klamath Tribal Directors at the pre-SOPA meeting in May, 2004. Tribal scoping letters were delivered on May 6, 2004. Public scoping was started by placing the proposed project on the Winema Summer 2004 Schedule of Proposed Actions and on the website. A public scoping letter was sent on June 8, 2004 to the Chiloquin District NEPA mailing list. The mailing list of individuals and organizations contacted is on file in the project record. No comments were received from the Klamath Tribes.

One comment letter was received from the Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC). Their main points of discussion included:

- **Unroaded area.** There are no Inventoried Roadless Areas on the Chiloquin District. ONRC submitted a map showing an area ONRC considers unroaded that is not within the project area and will not be affected.

- **Snags and down wood.** ONRC concerns are addressed in the project by the snags and down wood retained. For details, see the project record. The Project meets the snag and coarse woody debris direction in the Winema Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Eastside screens.
- **Effects on old growth dependent species, fish, and water quality.** These items are addressed in the specialist reports in the project record. INFISH direction will be met. No riparian areas are included in the proposed salvage.

- **Roads.** The Y Blowdown Salvage will use existing roads. No new road construction is proposed.

Chiloquin Ranger District and Fremont-Winema National Forest resource specialists reviewed the proposed action. I find that the issues raised by ONRC were adequately addressed by the resource specialists assigned to the project. No significant issues or concerns were identified during analysis.

**DECISION AND REASON FOR CATAGORICAL EXCLUSION:** I have reviewed the interdisciplinary analysis and have decided to proceed with the proposed salvage harvest. The salvage removal of concentrations of dead and damaged trees and the treatment of damaged small trees and fuels will keep the blowdown area from becoming a large pocket of heavy fuel concentration. Fuel loadings will be reduced, and fire hazard in the treated areas will be lowered. Salvage harvest will meet the Winema LRMP standard for this area for programmed timber harvest, and will move the blowdown area toward the desired future condition of “stands typically comprised of trees that are growing rapidly and have well developed crowns and low levels of mortality.” (LRMP p. 4-153) The harvest and associated activities will benefit the local economy by providing needed jobs, and materials for processing in local mills.

The salvage harvest is expected to be done during fall and winter 2004, and the whipfalling and slash piling in spring and summer 2005. Pile burning should take place in fall 2005.

This action falls within FSH 1909.15 Section 31.2, Category 13; "Salvage of dead and/or dying trees not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than ½ mile of temporary road construction, example (a) Harvest of a portion of a stand damaged by a wind or ice event.” No extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have significant effects; therefore, the action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. Based on the environmental analysis and past experience, the effects of implementing this action will be of limited context and intensity and will result in little or no effects to either the physical or biological components of the environment.

**FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS:** This action is consistent with the management direction, including standards and guidelines, as outlined in the Winema Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement documenting the analysis for the Plan. This action will comply with requirements of the Clean Water Act. The project fully meets INFISH direction.

No significant impact is expected on Sensitive, Threatened or Endangered species. A rating of May Impact Individuals or Habitat (MIIH) was determined for the Sensitive species Pacific Fringe-tailed Bats and Pacific Pallid Bats. This determination predicted minor, indirect disturbance of roosting and foraging bats from noise, and from smoke during pile burning. All other species received No Impact or No Effect determinations.
One historic prairie falcon nest exists near the project area. A seasonal restriction on project implementation from March 1 through August 31 will be applied to a small portion of the overall project, unless the nest is determined to be inactive by a qualified biologist.

The potential for the project to increase invasive species or noxious weeds is low because no known weed sites are currently present in or near the project area. Off road equipment will be required to be cleaned prior to entry onto the Forest to prevent weed seeds or other plant material from being introduced into the project area.

No significant impact is expected on cultural resources because known sites will be avoided and project activities will be monitored to identify and protect any other sites. No significant impact is expected on parkland, floodplains, wetlands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas. There are no anticipated significant impacts on consumers, minority groups, American Indians, women or civil rights. There are no anticipated significant impacts to Treaty and trust responsibilities with the Klamath Tribes. Consultation with the Klamath Tribes was done under provisions of the 1999 Memorandum of Agreement.

There are no known significant indirect, cumulative, or unavoidable adverse effects on the environment. There is no threat to public health or safety. Implementation of this proposal meets the resource protection requirements of 36 CFR 219.17.

**APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES/IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Pursuant to 36 CFR 215.4(a) this decision is not subject to requirements for Notice and Comment. This decision is not subject to appeal, pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.12(f). This decision may be implemented immediately.

**CONTACT PERSON:** Questions regarding this decision should be directed to Kevin Moore, Southwest Zone NEPA Coordinator, Chiloquin Ranger District, 38500 Hwy 97 North, Chiloquin, OR 97624; telephone 541-783-4001, or to Steve Mooney, Zone Silviculturist, Chiloquin Ranger District, Fremont-Winema National Forests, 541-783-4001.

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RICHARD RAGAN  
District Ranger  
Chiloquin Ranger District  
RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

September 22, 2004  
Date