This Decision Memo documents a decision by the District Ranger to proceed with the Balm Creek Blowdown Salvage Project on the La Grande Ranger District. The Project Record supporting this Decision Memo is available for public review at the La Grande Ranger District, 3502 Highway 30, La Grande, Oregon.

Background

The Balm Creek area experienced a severe wind in the vicinity of Balm Creek Reservoir during the winter of 2012/2013. This wind event left several hundred acres of scattered overstory trees either snapped off, up-rooted, or root-sprung which occurs when a tree sustains severe strain at the root crown and the root system is wrenched, causing the tree to tilt over it’s entire length. Since the support of the root system has been compromised such partially failed trees exhibit a high potential for falling (Harvey and Hessburg 1992). Trees affected by the storm include grand fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, western larch and Engelmann spruce with diameters generally between 9 and 22 inches at diameter breast height (DBH).

Reconnaissance within the area during the late spring of 2013 indicated an opportunity to salvage some of the down trees to provide a small timber sale offering.

The Balm Creek Blowdown Salvage Project is located in Sections 5, 6, and 7 of T7S, R43E and Sections 12 and 13 of T7S, R42E, WM, Baker County, Oregon, 8 miles southeast of Medical Springs, Oregon. The project consists of 2 areas totaling approximately 71 acres and 2.5 miles of roadside scattered salvage along the 7000 road on National Forest system lands which lie within Forest Plan Management Area (MA) 1, Intensive Timber Management. No wilderness, potential wilderness, wilderness study areas, inventoried or un-inventoried roadless areas are present in the project area. Refer to the attached maps.

The area being considered was most recently planned for vegetation treatment under the Bald Angel Environmental Assessment (EA) which was signed in 2007 and logged in 2012 (Unit 1). Unit 2 was logged under the Lost Goose Timber Sale in the early 1990’s. Refer to maps for unit locations. Post harvest fuel treatments in the Bald Angel area are incomplete and these blowdown trees may be lost during prescribed burning operations. Slopes in the area being considered are typically less than 35% and are suitable for tractor logging.

Decision

As District Ranger for the La Grande Ranger District, it is my decision to proceed with the Balm Creek Blowdown Salvage Project. The purpose of this project is to salvage wind damaged timber within 71 acres of previously harvested areas and along 2.5 miles of the 7000 road.

Harvested trees would be transported to an existing road with ground-based tractor logging systems. Approximately 2,000 feet of a temporary road, constructed for use in the Bald Angel timber sale, would be re-used in Unit 1, and then obliterated once the activities are completed.

No treatment is proposed within any riparian habitat conservation areas (RHCA) and requirements for season of operation and erosion control would be used to protect soils and site productivity. Blowdown removal along the 7000 road will be limited to that which can be reached by logging equipment from the road.
Harvest within this project area will be completed in 1 logging season after award of the contract.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Numbers</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>100,000 board ft</strong></td>
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No additional prescribed burning would occur under this project; however, this area will be treated by underburning as a part of a larger burn block in the Bald Angel project scheduled for implementation in 2014-2017.

In response to concerns over retention of adequate levels of snags and down woody material in treatment areas, all wind damaged trees with broken or snapped boles and a 4 acre patch of wind damaged trees will be retained as snags and future large woody debris.

In addition to the actions listed above, my decision includes the Management Requirements, Constraints and Mitigation Measures listed below.

**Management Requirements, Constraints and Mitigation Measures**

The following items are included in the proposed action and provide the measures necessary to keep project impacts at acceptable levels. These items would be applied to the proposal as it is implemented on the ground.

A) **Soil Quality**

Mass stability will be maintained (Forest Plan Soils S&G #1; FSM 2521.03.1.b R6 Supplement 2500-98-1), including stability of any existing landslides.

Soil productivity will be maintained by complying with Regional standards and guidelines in FSM 2521.03, R6 Supplement 2500-98-1. The standard is to “leave at least 80% of an activity area in acceptable soil quality condition.” Specific standards are defined for soil compaction, puddling, displacement, burning, surface erosion and mass wasting. Guidelines are defined for organic matter and soil moisture regime.

Compliance with soil quality standards in FSM 2521.03, R6 Supplement 2500-98-1, will be determined through use of protocols described in “Interim Protocol for Assessment and Management of Soil Quality Conditions,” Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Version 3.3, September 2001 or subsequent version. Burn conditions will be monitored using “fire severity” (burn intensity) and “severity burn” (burn area) concepts in Fire’s Effects on Ecosystems, by DeBano, Neary & Ffolliott, 1998, p. 63, as required by the current BAER manual, or appropriate modifications thereof to address thresholds in soil standards or hydrologic models.

The following soil guidelines from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest publication, *Watershed Management Practices - Guide for Achieving Soil and Water Objectives*,(BMP’s) are applicable to this sale:

**Existing infrastructure:** Existing landings and skid trails will be used as much as reasonable and practical.

**Soil Moisture:** Under saturated soil conditions no off-trail skidding is allowed. Skidding on designated trails may be allowed as long as such use does not cause deep rutting or high erosion potential. Allowing skidding under these conditions makes mitigation by subsoiling less effective and should be avoided both on and off trails. Existing skid trails will be used as much as reasonable and practical. (Sale Design H3)
B) **Water Quality**

1. **Water Quality Standards**

   Meet (or show progress toward meeting) water quality standards for Waters of the State of Oregon (Oregon Administrative Rules, Chapter 340-41) through project design, application and monitoring of best management practices (BMPs) as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations [40CFR 130.2(m)]. BMPs are used for various situations encountered during layout and administration of the timber sale contract and other activities. BMPs are listed in several sections of these constraints, including the “Logging and Sale Design” section, and in other documents, including the Wallowa-Whitman Watershed Management Practices Handbook, which is on file at the La Grande Ranger District.

2. **Erosion Control Methods**

   Highly disturbed areas (which may include: skid trails, temporary road, landings) will be seeded. The seed mix to be used will consist of native species, or a non-native species mix, to be approved by the District Diverse Species Program (contact program coordinator for the exact species mix and seeding schedule). This may include one fast germinating annual grass species to provide immediate ground cover. Seed application rates will be adjusted, as needed, to compensate for the broadcast method of application, and to generate vegetation densities adequate to provide a deterrent to noxious weed invasion.

   Seed will be certified weed free, per the Wallowa-Whitman Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan protocol.

C) **Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCAs) and Fisheries**

   No activity RHCA buffers were delineated along all riparian corridors, wetlands, intermittent streams, and other areas that help maintain the integrity of aquatic ecosystems. RHCAs 1) influence the delivery of sediment, organic matter, and woody debris to streams, 2) provide root strength for bank and channel stability, 3) shade the stream, and 4) protect floodplains and water quality.

   No blowdown will be removed from these areas.

D) **Wildlife**

1) **Snags and Down Woody Material (for wildlife and soils)**

   Snag clumps have been identified and will be protected during sale layout and harvest operations. All snapped off trees (standing bole/roots) and a 4 acre patch of wind damaged trees will remain on site to serve as current and future snags and down wood. All existing down wood (not associated with this recent wind event) will remain on site.

2) **Raptors**

   No historic or currently active nesting sites have been identified for this project area. If any raptor nests are located during layout and marking, appropriate protection measures will be prescribed.

E) **Fuels and Smoke Management**

   **Project Generated Slash:**

   Slash associated with this harvest will be lopped and scattered and left on site and considered for broadcast burning in the Bald Angel project.
F) Logging and Sale Design

The sale area boundary will be the unit boundaries as described on the map for this project.

Trees selected for retention under the Tree Improvement Program will be protected during project activities.

General Soil and Water Mitigations:

Generally, ground-based yarding will not occur on ground steeper than 35%. Existing skid trails will be used wherever possible.

The normal operating season for the analysis area is July 1 to October 31.

To prevent road damage and maintain water quality, road use will be restricted to dry or frozen conditions. If road use is approved outside the normal operating season, drainage structures (waterbars, Utah dips) will be kept in a functional condition, and daily operations will be managed to minimize sediment transport from roads. Operations will cease when roads turn muddy and/or rutting occurs, resulting in sediment transportation. Reference the district forest roads and erosion control document in analysis file, transportation section.

Temporary roads will be obliterated at the completion of harvest activities and put back into production. Obliteration may include re-contouring, scattering slash, subsoiling, and seeding, as ground conditions dictate.

Drainage structures will be installed and maintained on all open roads within RHCAs, using spacing guides listed in the Watershed Management Practices Handbook.

G) Range

Allotment boundary fences and other improvements damaged during the grazing season must be repaired to their functional condition immediately and damage outside the grazing season must be repaired two weeks prior to permitted livestock entry. Any damage occurring to existing range improvements should be reported to the District range manager and/or private landowner. All range improvements will be protected during prescribed burning activities. If damaged they will be repaired as discussed above.

H) Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Species (PETS)

Biological evaluations and/or assessments have been completed for plants, fish, and wildlife PETS species. Contract provisions will be included to provide for the protection of areas where PETS occur and for those, which may be discovered in the area during the contract period.

I) Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation

If noxious weed infestations are located within the project area, a noxious weed inventory and site assessment will be completed.

In response to the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation, an analysis was prepared which considered prevention, correction, or maintenance measures.

The following measures shall be implemented to reduce new establishment or spread of noxious weeds and responds to the non-key issue of noxious weeds:
Site Identification:

Noxious weeds sites discovered during any phase of project implementation will be designated as "Areas to Protect" (no decking, skidding or equipment) and included in the contract package for use by the sale administrator.

Clean Equipment:

All equipment to be operated on the project area will be cleaned in a manner sufficient to prevent noxious weeds from being carried on to the project area. This requirement does not apply to passenger vehicles or other equipment used exclusively on roads. Cleaning, if needed, will occur off of National Forest System lands. Cleaning will be inspected and approved by the Forest Officer in charge of administering the project.

Avoid Contaminated Materials:

All hay or straw used for mulching, erosion control, or other rehabilitation purposes will be weed free (per the Wallowa-Whitman INWMP protocol).

J) Cultural Resource Protection

The entire project area has been inventoried for cultural resources. The area has been recorded as cleared for project implementation; however, should a site be discovered during project activities, the Heritage Technician will be notified immediately and appropriate protection measures employed.

Monitoring Plan

Monitoring specific to project activities would be accomplished to assure that activities conform to objectives of the Forest Plan. Project level monitoring is a component of Forest Plan monitoring.

The following types of project level monitoring will be accomplished:

Implementation Monitoring - Are mitigation measures and BMPs being implemented as planned?

For example, monitoring of sale layout and timber designation will occur to assure proper application of all identified constraints and mitigation measures. Monitoring will also consist of timber sale contract administration to ensure that all required mitigation measures are properly implemented and are effective.

Included in the monitoring activities is compliance monitoring of Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive species (PETS). If PETS are discovered in the area during project activity they will be protected in accordance with appropriate contract provisions. Additional site monitoring during timber harvest will be undertaken to assure compliance with water quality standards, hydrology, and soil parameters.

Effectiveness Monitoring - Did mitigation and protection measures result in desired effects?

A walk-through survey of the project area during implementation and after sale closure will be conducted to qualitatively monitor on-site and downstream effects of project implementation.

If monitoring shows that mitigation measures of BMP's are not being implemented as planned or are not being effective in meeting resource objectives, activities will cease or be modified to correct problems.

Other Monitoring:

Noxious Weeds - The following elements will be monitored and documented:
Effectiveness and adherence to the mitigation measures.

**Fisheries and Watershed** - The following is a list of monitoring activities for fisheries and watershed resources, which have been or will be implemented prior to and following the project. These activities will provide information on evaluation of the sale and for future planning of projects in the area.

- a. Monitor the project to ensure that all standards and guidelines in the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Plan are met through implementation of mitigation measures as identified by the interdisciplinary team.
- b. Project Implementation - Monitoring of the implementation of project designs and mitigation measures will be accomplished frequently throughout the life of the project by the timber sale administrator.

**Soils** - Monitoring will be undertaken

- a) To ensure that best management practices and mitigating measures incorporated into the sale are being followed, and
- b) To determine if these practices and measures are adequate to meet the intent of management directives.

Monitoring of sale layout and contract administration will be undertaken to ensure proper application of all identified constraints and mitigating measures. Ground-based harvest units will be monitored to ensure adequate spacing between skid trails, restriction of equipment to skid trails, prevention of wet weather yarding, and effective subsoiling of compacted skid trails and landings.

**Wildlife** –

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Why</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snags, logs</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>During logging</td>
<td>TS administrator</td>
<td>To determine if prescribed material was retained</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Rationale for the Decision**

As stated in the July 29, 2003, Federal Register, based on a post-implementation field review of 154 similar projects, professional experts found that the impacts from projects like the Balm Creek Blowdown project were within forest plan standards and guidelines and were not significant in the NEPA context (40 CFR 1508.27). Based on their post-implementation field review of these projects along with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the responsible officials found that the individual and cumulative effects of the projects reviewed were not significant in the NEPA context. The Forest Service, therefore, concluded that the activities described in these categories do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

It is my decision to proceed with this project because it will allow capture of the timber value of wind thrown trees consistent with forest plan objectives for Management Area 1 lands. In addition, the project will contribute to the local economy by providing employment opportunity for local small operators and lumber production in local mills while retaining adequate levels of current and future snags and down woody debris for wildlife and site productivity needs.

**Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision:**

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories identified by the U.S. Department
of Agriculture in 7 CFR part 1b.3 or one of the categories identified by the Chief of the Forest Service in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15 sections 31.1b or 31.2 as, and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment.

I find the proposed action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits category 13 (Salvage of Dead and Dying Trees) of Section 31.2-1, described in Forest Service Handbook id_1909.15-2003-2, July 23, 2003. This category allows for salvage of dead and dying trees up to 250 acres with up to ½ mile of temporary road work.” This decision as described under the Decision above, meets the intent of these category by mechanically salvaging 71 acres of tree mortality using existing roads.

The primary purposes of this project are to recover the economic value of the blowdown trees and reduce fuel loadings. None of these activities will be conducted in wilderness areas, potential wilderness areas or where it can impair the suitability of wilderness; will not include the use of herbicides; and will not involve the construction of new permanent roads.

There are no impacts to extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the decision to implement 71 acres of blowdown salvage does not warrant further analysis in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the Record.

Mitigations for season of operation, no-activity RHCA buffers, and erosion control would mitigate potential erosion.

All the areas selected for treatment are outside of Inventoried Roadless Areas. Project activities are surrounded completely by roads and therefore will not affect potential wilderness areas.

Based on analysis and previous experience this project will have limited context and intensity and produce little or no individual or cumulative environmental affects to either the biological or physical components of the human environment.

**Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances**

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the project that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. The rationale for this finding follows:

1. **Steep Slopes or Highly Erosive Soils** – The project is located in rolling to flat terrain and soil types conducive to the activities included in the decision. This is supported by topographical map review and field visits. This decision should not result in significant slope-related impacts. To further ensure that slope-related impacts are minimized, Best Management Practices are incorporated.

2. **Threatened and Endangered Species or Their Critical Habitat** – The Endangered Species Act requires that federal activities do not jeopardize the continued existence of any species federally listed or proposed as threatened or endangered, or result in adverse modification to such species’ designated critical habitat. In accordance with Section 7(c) of this Act, a list of the listed and proposed, threatened or endangered species that may be present in the project area was developed for each species. As required by this Act, potential effects of this decision on listed species have been analyzed and documented in a Biological Evaluation (Project File).

   The implementation of this project will have “no effect” on redband trout or bull trout designated critical habitat, nor lead to a Federal listing of the sensitive species addressed. This project will not jeopardize the continued existence of these species.
Due to the short duration of the project and the very minor amount of potential disturbance from this project there will be no effect to any known or potential habitat for Federally listed species or the Region 6 sensitive species or their habitat in the project area. (Project File Specialist Report/BE).

There will be "no effect" to any threatened, endangered, candidate, or proposed plant species. Project activities may impact undiscovered individual plants or habitat for the R-6 sensitive species; however, they will not contribute to a loss of viability of, or move a species toward federal listing (FSM 2672.43).

As required by this Act, potential effects of this decision on listed species have been analyzed and documented in a Biological Evaluation (refer to the project file). It was determined that this decision will have 'no effect' on listed species or their critical habitats. For all sensitive species found, this project will have no effect or lead to a Federal listing (FSM 2672.43) of the sensitive species addressed.

3. Floodplains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds -

Floodplains: Executive Order 11988 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. Floodplains are defined by this order as, "... the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including flood prone areas of offshore islands, including at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent [100-year recurrence] or greater chance of flooding in any one year." The project is not located in or near floodplains. This has been validated by map and site-review. This decision will not affect floodplains.

Wetlands: Executive Order 11990 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with destruction or modification of wetlands. Wetlands are defined by this order as, "... areas inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mud flats, and natural ponds." The project is not located in or near wetlands. This decision will not affect wetlands.

Municipal Watersheds: Municipal watersheds are managed under multiple use prescriptions in land and resource management plans. There are no municipal watersheds in this project area. This decision will not affect municipal watersheds.

4. Congressionally Designated Areas – There would be no adverse impacts to wild and scenic rivers, wildernesses, or wilderness study areas.

5. Inventoried Roadless Areas and Potential Wilderness Areas - There are no Inventoried Roadless Areas (RARE II or Forest Plan) in the decision area and the area does not meet criteria for potential wilderness outlined in FSH 1909.12 71.1. This decision will not affect Inventoried Roadless Areas or potential wilderness areas.

6. Research Natural Areas - There are no Research Natural Areas in the project area. This decision does not affect National Recreation Areas.

7. Native American Religious or Cultural Sites, Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas -

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act also requires federal agencies to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act covers the discovery and protection of historic properties (prehistoric and historic) that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It affords lawful protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on public and Indian lands. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act covers the discovery and
protection of Native American human remains and objects that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It encourages avoidance of archaeological sites that contain burials or portions of sites that contain graves through “in situ” preservation, but may encompass other actions to preserve these remains and items. This decision complies with the cited Acts. Surveys were conducted for Native American religious or cultural sites, archaeological sites, and historic properties or areas that may be affected by this decision. A ‘no properties affected’ determination was made.

Additionally, the Federal government has trust responsibilities to Tribes under a government-to-government relationship to insure that the Tribes reserved rights are protected. Consultation with tribes helps insure that these trust responsibilities are met. The Forest consulted with potentially affected tribes. The intent of this consultation has been to remain informed about Tribal concerns and ensure traditional uses and tribal treaty rights are protected.

This project has no potential to affect historic properties as disclosed in the heritage report in the project file.

Public Scoping

This project was first published in the summer of 2013, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions, a quarterly newsletter published by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest which is posted on the Forest’s web site.

Potentially interested individuals and organizations were notified of the project by the District Ranger and a complete description of the project with maps was published on the Forest website in July 2013.

The notice for the 30 day public comment period was published in the La Grande Observer newspaper on July 5, 2013. One comment letter was received on this project and responses to the comments are provided as an appendix to this decision memo.

Documentation of all scoping and collaborative efforts is located in the project file for this project at the District office.

Findings Required By and/or Related To Other Laws and Regulations:

My decision will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. I have summarized some pertinent ones below.

Federal Land Policy and Management Act - This Act allows the granting of easements across National Forest System Lands. The regulations at 36 CFR 251 guide the issuance of permits, leases, and easements under this Act. Permits, leases, and easements are granted across National Forest System lands when the need for such is consistent with planned uses and Forest Service policy and regulations. This decision is consistent with this Act.

Forest Plan Consistency (National Forest Management Act) - This Act requires the development of long-range land and resource management plans (Plans). The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Plan was approved in April 1990, as required by this Act. It has since been amended several times. The amended plan provides for guidance for all natural resource management activities. The Act requires all projects and activities are consistent with the Plan. The Plan has been reviewed in consideration of this project. This decision is responsive to guiding direction contained in the Plan, as summarized in Forest Plan Checklist in the project file; this decision is consistent with the standards and guidelines contained in the Plan.

I have determined that the proposed action is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines of the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Plan as amended, (refer to Standards and Guidelines Checklist in the Analysis File).

The project is consistent with Forest-wide standards and guidelines and the standards and guidelines of
the following land allocations: MA-1: Intensive Timber Management.

Surveys for Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive species were conducted where needed. There would be no adverse impacts to any of these species (refer to wildlife and botanical BA/BE’s).

The salvage harvest methods will meet the objectives and requirements of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

No timber will be sold from lands not suited for timber production - 36 CFR 219.27 (c). Management prescriptions proposed for the harvesting of timber within this decision comply with requirements found at 36 CFR 219.27 (b) for manipulating tree cover.

All manipulation of vegetation in these compartments will comply with the seven requirements of 36 CFR 219.27(b) and meet the constraints and conditions of the Wallowa-Whitman Integrated Weed Management Plan.

This action is consistent with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended.

As stated in the July 29, 2003 Federal Register, based on a post-implementation field review of 154 similar projects, professional experts found that the impacts from projects like the Balm Creek Blowdown Project were within forest plan standards and guidelines and were not significant in the NEPA context (40 CFR 1508.27). Based on their post-implementation field review of these projects along with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the responsible officials found that the individual and cumulative effects of the projects reviewed were not significant in the NEPA context. The Forest Service, therefore, concluded that the activities described in these categories do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment.

Endangered Species Act – See Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances section above and biological evaluations in the Project file.

Sensitive Species (Forest Service Manual 2670) - This Manual direction requires analysis of potential impacts to sensitive species, those species for which the Regional Forester has identified population viability as a concern. Potential effects of this decision on sensitive species have been analyzed and documented in a Biological Evaluation (Plants BE, Fish BE, and Wildlife BE in Project File). Project activities may impact undiscovered individual plants or habitat for the Region 6 sensitive species; however, they will not contribute to a loss of viability of, or move a species toward federal listing (FSM 2672.43).

Clean Water Act - This Act is to restore and maintain the integrity of waters. The Forest Service complies with this Act through the use of Best Management Practices. This decision incorporates Best Management Practices to ensure protection of soil and water resources (Fisheries and Watershed Report in the Project file).

Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) - See Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances section above and Fisheries and Watershed Report in the Project file.

Floodplains (Executive Order 11988) - See Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances section above and Fisheries and Watershed Report in the 2010 TSI Project file.

Federal Cave Resources Protection Act - This Act is to secure, protect, preserve, and maintain significant caves, to the extent practical. Site features and field review substantiate that no caves are in the area (Wildlife BE). No known cave resources will be affected by this decision.


Wild and Scenic Rivers Act – There are no designated wild and scenic rivers impacted with this decision. See Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances section above.

Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898) - This Order requires consideration of whether projects would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. This decision complies with this Act. Public involvement occurred for this project, the results of which I have considered in this decision-making. Public involvement did not identify any adversely impacted local minority or low-income populations. This decision is not expected to adversely impact minority or low-income populations.

National Environmental Policy Act - This Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. The entirety of documentation for this decision supports compliance with this Act.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities:

If no appeal is filed, this project may be implemented five business days after the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is filed, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition. This decision may be appealed by any person who expressed interest in this proposed action, or any non-Federal organization or entity that has provided comment by the close of the comment period, which ended August 5, 2013. Any written notice of appeal of the decision must be consistent with 36 CFR 215.14, “Appeal Content.” The notice of appeal must be filed hard copy with the Appeal deciding officer at the following address:

John Laurence, Forest Supervisor
National Forest Headquarters
Attn.: 1570 APPEALS
P.O. Box 907
1550 Dewey Ave.
Baker City, OR. 97814

Or it may be faxed to:
Fax: (541) 523-1315

Or sent electronically to:
appeals-pacificnorthwest-wallowa-whitman@fs.fed.us

It may also be hand delivered to the address above between the hours of 7:45AM and 4:30PM, Monday through Friday except holidays. The appeal must be postmarked or delivered within 45 days from the date the legal notice for this decision appears in The Observer newspaper.

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.
Contact Person

For further information contact:

Bill Gamble – District Ranger
Address: 3502 Hwy 30, La Grande, OR 97850
Phone: (541) 962-8582
Email: bgamble@fs.fed.us

/s/ Bill Gamble 8/22/2013
BILL GAMBLE
District Ranger
La Grande Ranger District

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