

REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM OFFICE

1220 SW 3rd P.O. Box 3623
Portland, Oregon 97208-3623
Website: www.reo.gov E-Mail: reomail@or.blm.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 13, 2016

TO: Bonnie Million, Associate Field Manager
BLM - Grants Pass Field Office

FROM: George McFadden, Regional Ecosystem Office Representative to the Regional Interagency Executive Committee

SUBJECT: Regional Ecosystem Office Review of the Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project on the Medford BLM District, Grants Pass Field Office

Summary

The Regional Ecosystem Office (REO) interagency Late-Successional Reserve (LSR) Work Group has concluded its review of the documents provided by the BLM Grants Pass Field Office regarding proposed activities of the Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project in the South Umpqua River/Galesville LSR. The REO, based upon the review by the LSR Work Group, concurs with the BLM Grants Pass Field Office in its finding of consistency with the Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) under the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) for the Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project.

Basis for Review

Silviculture, risk reduction, and salvage treatments in LSRs are subject to REO review under the NWFP S&Gs (C-12 to C-15). As required by the NWFP S&G (C-11), the BLM and Forest Service prepared a Late-Successional Reserve Assessment (LSRA) for the South Umpqua River/Galesville LSR. This LSR Assessment was completed in 1999 and amended (with subsequent REO review) in 2004. During that review, REO concluded that silvicultural and risk treatments that were consistent with the LSRA management recommendations and with NWFP S&Gs were exempted from subsequent, project-level REO review. The BLM requested that the REO review silvicultural activities that would harvest trees 20-25" in dbh and that would harvest trees greater than 80 years old.

Project Scope and Description

The project includes approximately 1,243 acres of commercial thinning (including 370 acres in stands 81-140 years old) and 766 acres of understory removal (including 449 acres in stands 81-140 years old). The objective of the understory removal is to decrease fire risk and enhance desired LSR conditions.

Within these proposed acres, there would also be 288 acres of legacy tree culturing, which would remove Douglas-fir trees up to 25" dbh in an area twice the crown radius of the legacy tree.

Review of the Project

Activities reviewed by the LSR Work Group are from the November 2015 report provided by the BLM. The Work Group's review was based on the information within that document, and well as information provided in subsequent emails and conference calls.

The interagency LSR Work Group review concluded that the proposed treatments in LSRs meet LSR objectives and S&Gs. This conclusion was reached in part for the following reasons:

- Treatments would target single-canopied, low diversity stands and areas of overstocked understory.
- Some areas would be left untreated to provide diversity or as protection buffers.
- Legacy tree culturing would promote the survival and retention of large, older trees with thicker bark.
- Stands identified for removal of trees >20" dbh would contain adequate numbers of larger diameter trees to provide desired LSR conditions in the future.
- This is an area with productive growing sites, and trees >20" dbh slated for removal are not necessarily old.
- Removal of some trees >20" dbh is needed to enhance the development of late-successional habitat characteristics.

Conclusion

Based upon the interagency REO LSR Work Group review, the REO concurs with the Field Office's conclusion that the activities proposed in the Upper Cow Late Successional Reserve Project are consistent with the NWFP.

If you have questions regarding this review, please contact Kim Mellen-McLean at 503-808-2677.



George McFadden

BLM REO Representative to the REIC

cc: Ferris Fisher, Grants Pass BLM
Robyn Darbyshire, LSR Workgroup, FS
Kim Mellen-McLean, LSR Workgroup, FS