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REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM OFFICE

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2013

TO: John Huston, Cascades Resource Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management

FROM: Jerry Hubbard, BLM REO Representative to the RIEC

SUBJECT: Regional Ecosystem Office Review of the FY 2013 and 2014 Pre-Commercial Density Management Projects in Late Successional Reserves in the Cascades Resource Area

Summary: The Regional Ecosystem Office (REO) interagency Late-Successional Reserve (LSR) Work Group has concluded its review of the documents provided by the Cascades Resource Area of the Salem District of the Oregon and Washington Bureau of Land Management. We were asked to review 2000 acres of proposed pre-commercial density management projects in 20 to 40 year old stands in the Quartzville (LSR PO213) and Molalla (LSR's RO208 and RO209) fifth field watersheds. The REO, based upon review by the LSR Work Group, concurs with the Resource Area in its finding of consistency with the Standards and Guidelines (S&G) under the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) for the proposed pre-commercial density management projects.

Basis for the Review: Silviculture treatments in LSRs are subject to REO review under the NWFP S&G (C-12) if they do not meet existing exemption criteria established in REO memo dated April 20, 1995. The exemption covers a subset of silvicultural activities from REO review including pre-commercial density management activities that do not cut or girdle trees over eight (8) inches in diameter at breast height.

Background and Project Description: The Cascades Resource Area proposes to thin up to 2,000 acres of previously managed stands (plantations less than 40 years old) over the next three to five years. Currently, these stands are over stocked with between 200 to 2,000 trees per acre. Stands would be thinned to a residual density in a range between 80 and 150 trees per acre. The proposed actions would retain all trees greater than twelve (12) inches in diameter breast height (DBH). Thinning would be completed with use of chainsaws and hand tools. No heavy machinery would be used. Spacing of trees in the residual stand would average 21 feet; however, spacing within the stand may be varied with a possible variation of 75 percent of the 21 foot spacing. A minimum of 10 percent of the project area would remain untreated areas and no treatment riparian buffers would be retained for diversity. To further increase unit diversity, low

density pre-commercial thinning patches may be created within the pre-commercial thinning units. Structural diversity would be encouraged by leaving trees with forked or broken tops, branchy, open grown trees and other trees with unusual form or structure. In addition, standing snags may be created by girdling in the units. Species diversity would be maintained by favoring minor tree species including Chinquapin, cedar, pine, true fir, and big leaf maple.

Review of the Project: The LSR Work Group reviewed materials submitted by the Cascades Resource Area regarding the proposed projects and met with and briefed by Cascades Resource Area staff on April 24, 2013. The Work Group's review and finding were based on information obtained from these resources.

The interagency LSR Work Group review concluded that the proposed pre-commercial thinning density management activities would require cutting some trees over 8 inches DBH. This is necessary to better meet LSR objectives of maintaining variability in tree species, sizes and spacing, and to implement proportional thinning through all size classes. These trees would be left on site for CWD and nutrient cycling. All trees over twelve inches would be reserved from cutting, which would retain the biggest and best trees for future development of stand diversity and CWD.

Conclusion: Based on the interagency REO LSR Work Group's review and conclusions, the REO concurs with the Cascades Resource Area's conclusion that the limited pre-commercial thinning of trees over eight (8) inches in diameter at breast height in the Quartzville and Molalla fifth field watersheds are consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan.

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



/s/ Michael L. Hampton

For Jerry Hubbard

BLM REO Representative to the RIEC

cc: Kim Titus, Salem District BLM
Michael Hampton, REO, USFS
Kim Mellen-McLean, LSR Workgroup, FS

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