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SOUTHWEST OREGON DISTRICT

2006 ANNUAL OPERATIONS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Operations Plan describes activities and projects designed to achieve the goals and objectives of the Southwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan – January 2001, the Forest Roads Manual – July 2000, and the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003. In addition, this plan is designed to comply with State Forest Policies governing Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Plants and Animals. The Southwest Oregon District manages approximately 18,000 acres of State Forest land in Douglas, Josephine, Jackson, and Curry counties. For more information regarding the strategies used to manage State Forests in Southwest Oregon, refer to the Southwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan – January 2001. For more information on the resources and characteristics specific to the Southwest Oregon District, refer to the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003.

The Southwest Oregon District 2006 Annual Operations Plan is organized to include the following:

1. Annual Operations Plan Summary document which includes sections on timber harvest operations, forest roads, young stand management operations, recreation, etc.
2. Annual Operations Plan Summary tables
3. Pre-Operation Reports with unit maps
4. Preliminary Biological Assessments for each of the planned commercial forest operations
5. Public Involvement Summary

Table 1 below documents the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003, activities and the range of acreages that could be reasonably anticipated in a given year. These acreages have been adjusted to remove roads and special stewardship classes that are not considered part of the commercial forest landbase. Net acres listed in the Annual Operations Plan and in Table 1 below have been adjusted to account for the same reductions as identified in Appendix A of the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003. Gross Acres listed in the Annual Operations Plan, however, have not been adjusted to reflect these reductions and represent the area in

which the commercial activity is planned. Further refinement of the gross acreage will occur during the field preparation of the planned commercial forest operation.

The current levels of activities planned in the Southwest Oregon District 2006 Annual Operations Plan fall within the ranges set in the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003. Of the activities planned in this Annual Operations Plan summarized below, it is likely that the commercial forest operations and road related activities will be prepared this year but not completed for several years. The non-commercial forest operations, however, will be prepared and completed before the end of the 2006 fiscal year (July 2006).

Table 1. Annual Operations Plan objectives compared to annual objectives identified in the 2003 Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan (Table 8-20). All values are in acres.

Silvicultural Activity	IP Annual Objective		2006 AOP Objective
	Low	High	
Conifer Partial Cut	180	270	220
Conifer Regeneration	0	0	0
Hardwood Partial Cut	0	0	0
Hardwood Regeneration	0	0	0
Rehabilitation	0	50	0
Reforestation (under Planting)	0	0	0
Precommercial Thinning	0	500	160
Fertilization	0	250	0
Pruning	0	50	0

INTEGRATED FOREST MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Timber Harvest Operations

Overview of Timber Harvest Operations

The 2006 sale plan provides for 220 net acres of partial cutting mixed conifer stands. This amount of harvest represents approximately 1.2% of the State Forest land in the Southwest Oregon District. It is anticipated that the acreage may be reduced due to non-thinnable areas and/or T&E species issues. The main sale unit of the 2006 sale year is in the Windy Creek block of the Southwest Oregon District. An alternate sale near Galice was chosen to backfill acres that may be lost due to the uncertainty of sale planning in the vicinity of endangered species. The partial cut units were selected on the basis of stand management needs in light of the current stand structures and the desired future condition objectives. In all of the partial cuts, stand complexity will progress toward the desired future condition through the retention of all “legacy” forest components, the retention of the majority of the overstory, the utilization of a variety of residual densities and opening configurations, site preparation, and underplanting of a variety of forest tree species. In addition, the structural components of snags and downed wood will be created where deficiencies exist.

See Table 1 above, and Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Appendix for summary information concerning timber harvest operations.

Table 2. Stand Structure Development – This table summarizes how the Timber Harvest Operations in this AOP will contribute to achieving the District’s desired future condition. All values are in acres.

Stand Structure	REG	CSC	UDS	LYR	OFS	GEN¹
Current	0	7	213	0	0	
Post Harvest²	0	0	220	220	0	
Desired Future				220	0	0

1. General (GEN) is not a stand structure, but identifies those stands that are not targeted for Layered or Older Forest Structure in the District landscape design. These stands may develop into any of the five stand structures.
2. The Post Harvest stand structure is an estimate of how the stands will develop in five to ten years after the operations are completed.

Table 2 shows the result of partial cutting these stands for the first five to ten years following the operation and the desired future condition. The LYR and OFS stands are visible from Interstate 5 or within an area currently occupied by Northern Spotted Owls. Partial cutting these stands will be designed to maintain or enhance their visual and biological characteristics. The result of not managing these stands would include an increased risk of catastrophic loss due to wildfire, insects, and windthrow. In order to

minimize the long term, negative effects to these stands, and to increase the potential for continued stand structure development; partial cutting is necessary. The CSC and UDS stands either remain in the same stand structure class or increase in complexity as a direct result of the operations. The net result of these operations is an overall increase in stand complexity, the incorporation of snags and downed wood, the reduction of fuel loading, and the initiation of a new understory.

Summary of Operations by Basin

Table 3. Summary of Timber Harvest Operations in each basin. All values are in acres.

Basin	2006 AOP		Cumulative Operations ¹ (FY 02, 03, 04, 05, 06)	
	Partial Cut	Regeneration	Partial Cut	Regeneration
Rogue	0	0	517	0
Umpqua	220	0	563	0

1. The Cumulative Operations include all Timber Harvest Operations, prepared and proposed, under the current implementation plan period (July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2011). Operations or units that were proposed, but have been subsequently dropped, are not included in the total.

Rogue Basin

The Maple Galice Timber sale is an alternate sale that may be offered if there is a shortage of acres due to the uncertainty of planning timber sales around endangered species. The sale is two sale units, the Galice piece (20 acres) and Maple Gulch (129 acres). Both sites are similar in size and species composition. The current stands are split between CSC and UDS. The areas are overstocked with conifers and need density management to reduce the threat of disease and wildfire and to enhance old forest structure (OFS) development.

The overall effect of this operation on the basin will be to reduce the amount of overstocked trees, mortality, and fuel loading on the landscape .

Umpqua Basin

The Fortune Cookie timber sale is within the Windy Creek block of the southwest ownership. This operation includes the partial cutting of 220 acres of overdense conifer stands. There are two areas within this operation that will receive slightly different prescriptions based on their current stocking levels and hardwood patches occurring in the stands. The objective is to reduce the overstory density to allow for stand health and vigor and to promote layering and increase species diversity. An upper diameter limit will be established to maintain structural complexity.

The overall effect of this operation on the basin will be to improve the growth and development of the remaining overstory through partial cutting. This combination of silvicultural treatments will continue the development and presence of complex stand structures.

Forest Roads Management

Overview

The primary purposes of the transportation management activities are to continue the development and maintenance of a low impact transportation system for the management of Southwest Oregon District State Forests. Due to the scattered nature of the SWO District ownership, the typical transportation pattern for access to State Forest land is one primary road crossing a variety of landowners and several access spurs once within State Forest property. The primary access road may be surfaced or unsurfaced and may or may not meet current drainage standards depending on the landowner. The primary access roads needed to access State Forest property will be maintained by State to the point necessary to maintain the access agreement developed by the District and the appropriate landowner.

The access spurs within State Forest properties are developed to the extent needed to maintain the appropriate management presence that is anticipated for a given tract. For tracts requiring an extended management presence, surface rock and drainage structures will be incorporated into the road design. For tracts requiring limited management presence, naturally surfaced, seasonal roads with temporary drainage structures will be utilized. Upon completion of the operation, all access spurs will be assessed for closure.

All of the proposed timber sales have existing forest roads that will require upgrading in order to meet access requirements. These roads will be improved or constructed to meet the minimum design standards necessary to prevent impact to the stream resource. Various prescriptions for road renovation will be required including but not limited to: resurfacing with rock, replacing undersized culverts, adding new culverts as needed for proper drainage, grading and ditching, and roadside brushing. Also, any potential hazards such as slides, sidecast material, and other drainage issues will be identified and corrected. The primary objective is to minimize the effect forest roads have on water quality and slope stability and at the same time provide a safe and efficient transportation system. All reconstructed roads will have the natural drainage reestablished, be grass seeded, and blocked upon completion of the operation to minimize erosion and sedimentation. In addition, Level III planning in accordance with the Forest Roads Manual – July 2000 is conducted for each operation. See the attached Pre-Operations Reports for more detailed information concerning road activities within each operation area.

Neither of the sales will yield a net increase in active forest roads on the District. During active timber harvest, the purchaser of the sale will maintain these roads. Upon completion of the sale, road maintenance responsibility will be returned to the landowner.

See Table A-3 in the Appendix for summary information concerning road activities.

Table 4. Summary of Road Management Activities. All values are in miles.

	High Use		Medium Use		Low Use	
	AOP	IP ¹	AOP	IP ¹	AOP	IP ¹
Road Construction	0	0-1	0	0-1	1	2-3
Road Improvement	0	0-1	0	0-2	1	3-4
Road Closure/Vacation	0	0	0	0-1	1	3-4
Road Maintenance – District²	0		0		0	
Road Maintenance – Active Operations³	0		0		1	

1. These are annual estimates derived from Table 8-8 – Road Activities FY 2002-2011 of the 2003 District Implementation Plan. The values here were derived by dividing the values in the Road Activities table by 10.
2. The road maintenance estimates include only the work to be completed during Fiscal Year 2006 by the District road crew or service contract. Estimates of road maintenance were not made in the Implementation Plan.
3. This is a broad estimate of the road maintenance that may be accomplished during the fiscal year, through active commercial operations. However, the exact amount can not be predicted at this time.

Road Construction

Road construction will primarily focus on the development of low use spurs necessary for operation access. These spurs will remain naturally surfaced during the operation and generally have natural drainage reestablished, be grass seeded, and blocked upon completion of the operation to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

Road Improvement

Road improvement will primarily focus on medium use roads and low use spurs that are necessary for operation access. These roads are not currently in a sufficient condition for commercial activity and may be open or closed to vehicular travel. Medium use roads will be upgraded for continual use following the operation when closure or vacation is not feasible. Low use will be improved for operation access and will generally have natural drainage reestablished, be grass seeded, and blocked upon completion of the operation to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

Road Access Management

As previously mentioned, due to the scattered nature of the SWO District ownership, the typical transportation pattern for access to State Forest land is one primary road crossing a variety of landowners and several access spurs once within State Forest ownership. This makes road access management difficult. When feasible, road systems currently in place will be utilized for State Forest access. This will require coordination and permission with adjacent landowners. At times, road maintenance on other forest landowner road systems will be required as a condition of use.

Once on State ownership, the road system will be maintained in a condition which best reflects use intensity, duration, and season. Roads receiving medium to high use, frequent use, or all season use, will be surfaced with rock to prevent damage to the road and the aquatic system, will be ditched including cross drainage, and will have sufficient drainage to pass a 50 year flood event. Roads receiving medium to low use, infrequent use, or seasonal use will remain unsurfaced during the operation, outsloped with waterbars, and will generally have natural drainage reestablished, be grass seeded, and blocked upon completion of the operation to minimize erosion and sedimentation. Therefore, medium to high use roads will generally be maintained in an active use condition while medium to low use roads will be maintained in a closed to partially vacated condition.

Road Maintenance

Road maintenance is typically conducted with commercial forest operations as a means to conduct the operation as well as to maintain or improve the condition of the transportation system. Road maintenance conducted apart from commercial operations is on an as needed basis and is usually a result of improper use or unexpected soil movement. As a means of reducing road induced sedimentation, the District actively grass seeds sediment delivery and sediment receiving areas and blocks vehicular access. Estimates for road maintenance activities are summarized in Table 4 above.

Land Surveying

Portions of Fortune Cookie will be surveyed along shared ownership boundaries between the State and BLM ownership. The district will investigate the possibility of sharing the cost with the BLM or will use certified surveyors from Coos District of the ODF.

Young Stand Management

This section on Young Stand Management is designed to give insight into the intensive and extensive forest management activities such as site preparation, reforestation, tree protection, and precommercial thinning. Under the Southwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan (FMP) and the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan, the objectives for the SWO District are to maintain the high level of biodiversity exhibited throughout the landscape as well as provide for economic and social sustainability in the future. This will be accomplished while functioning at the appropriate budget matrix level using the management activities below.

See Table 1 above and Table A-4 in the Appendix for summary information concerning Young Stand Management.

Rehabilitation

There are no rehabilitation activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Site Preparation

This intensive management tool is used to create planting space and reduce competing vegetation. In addition, site preparation is an excellent means to reduce the fuel loading following a commercial operation. Without slash management methods, one can expect to see higher rates of mortality, a higher risk of catastrophic loss from fire, and losses in growth, vigor, and overall health due to competition from surrounding vegetation. The overall goal is to create excellent micro-sites that are free of competing vegetation which minimizes seedling mortality and creates an area relatively safe from loss due to wildland fire. The plan is to use mechanical site preparation combined with slash piling, slash burning and/or slash removal to create plantable spaces. Slash removal may come in the form of yarding unmerchantable tree tops to landing areas combined with public or commercial wood cutting permits.

Planting

Planting serves many functions in the Southwest Oregon District. Initial planting serves to reforest an area following a clearcut, patch cut, or severe wildfire. Interplanting serves to increase the diversity of an area when significant mortality results due to wildland fire, animal browse, drought, freeze, or other event usually targeting only a portion of the stand. Underplanting creates multiple forest canopy layers while maintaining or improving overall stand health and diversity. In addition, each of these planting strategies has a target stocking level for the planted species. Initial planting and interplanting attempt to achieve 250 to 300 viable trees per acre while underplanting may only need 50 to 100 viable trees per acre.

For the fiscal year 2006 the District will not need to do any planting.

Vegetation Management

Vegetation management through manual release reduces competition from madrone and other aggressive hardwoods to reestablish conifer stands. Stump sprouts from madrone trees will be cut and the stumps treated to give the conifer a few more years to grow above the shrubs and hardwood.

In fiscal year 2006, the district will treat a 34 acre stand for madrone stump sprouting. The area to be treated is called Three Creeks Area I.

Tree Protection

Large ungulates (deer and elk) have proven to hold a huge threat to newly planted seedlings in this District. They often damage the terminal bud of young trees stunting tree growth and/or causing seedling mortality by browsing on the new growth. The damage done by ungulates can have a significant effect on the stocking level. To avoid re-entry and future interplants, an application of Big Game Repellant (BGR) has shown to be

extremely successful in deterring animal browse. The plan is to apply BGR to approximately 195 acres in the Umpqua Basin in fiscal year 2006.

Precommercial Thinning (density management)

This treatment is used on stands that have over 250 trees or woody stems per acre. If these stands are not thinned it can significantly increase the number of growing years before the stand is merchantable as well as reducing the stand's health, vigor, and resistance to insects and disease. If the stand is not thinned, density-dependent mortality can take place along with inter-specific competition for limited resources i.e. (water and light). Stands will be thinned to approximately 222 trees per acre so that the next entry can be a commercial thin at 40-50 years of age. Some stands (i.e. pine stands) may be thinned to a lower density (approximately 170 trees per acre) to meet wildlife, structure, and silvicultural objectives. It is estimated that 200 to 300 acres of precommercial thinning can be maintained each year for the next 10 years to achieve the appropriate stocking levels for the young stands on the District. The plan is to PCT approximately 160 acres in Yale Creek in fiscal year 2006.

Fertilization

There are no fertilization activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Pruning

There are no pruning activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Recreation Management

Overview of Recreation Management

There are currently three forest recreation sites located on State Forest land in the Southwest Oregon District. These include Windy Park, London Peak Trailhead, and Kerby Peak Trail. In addition, a fitness/interpretive arboretum is located at the Grants Pass headquarters and a historic Civilian Conservation Corps building is located at the Central Point headquarters. Recreational use of the forest is currently low and primarily consists of horseback riding, ATV use, hunting, and sightseeing. As time and budgets permit, a recreation and cultural resource assessment will be developed. Once the assessment is complete, local communities and volunteers will be approached to develop a plan for the maintenance and development of these resources.

See Table A-5 in the Appendix for summary information concerning Recreation Management.

Facilities (Campgrounds, View Points, Trail Heads, etc.)

There are no recreational facility activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Trails

There are no recreational trail activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Land Exchange

There are no land exchange activities planned for fiscal year 2006.

Other Integrated Forest Management Operations

There are no additional integrated forest management operations planned for fiscal year 2006.

PLANNING (AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS)

Stand Level Inventory and Other Vegetation Inventories

As a part of the statewide SLI contract, the Southwest Oregon District will have a private contractor inventory approximately 10 stands encompassing 552 acres in FY 2006. District personnel may inventory an additional 5-10 stands encompassing 500 acres if time and workload permit. The combination of this years and previous years inventories will approximate nearly 12,817 acres or 71% of the District. This new inventory information will provide valuable information for future planning, operation development, and activity monitoring.

Fish and Wildlife Surveys

Northern Spotted Owl: Surveys for this species to support commercial and noncommercial activity are planned throughout the District. Currently, 2882 acres of State Forest land are planned for survey in fiscal year 2006. This does not include the adjacent acres of private and federal land that will be surveyed in conjunction with the State surveys.

Marbled Murrelet: Surveys for this species to support commercial activities are planned in the Raspberry Mountain area. Currently, 367 acres of State Forest land are planned for survey in fiscal year 2006. This does not include the adjacent acres of federal land that will be surveyed in conjunction with the State surveys.

Threatened and Endangered Fish: There are no fish surveys planned for fiscal year 2006. All perennial streams with unknown fish use are treated as fish bearing streams unless they are rendered unsuitable due to the presence of a natural barrier (i.e. high waterfall) or steep gradient (greater than 20%).

Watershed Assessments

ODF is committed to perform watershed analysis on key watersheds on State Forest lands. Watershed analysis will be used to gain insights into the interaction between ecological resources and forest management. This, in turn, will provide information for future Annual Operations Plans and Implementation Plans, as well as potential revisions to Forest Management Plans. No watershed assessments are scheduled for fiscal year 2006.

Research and Monitoring

The incorporation of base level data through the Stand Level Inventory project will be the primary focus of the District toward the achievement of Research and Monitoring goals in fiscal year 2006. In addition, the District will remain involved in the implementation of the Monitoring Implementation Plan through participation in the Research and Monitoring workgroup.

Other Planning Operations

Road Inventory – Continue the refinement of a Transportation, Maintenance, and Road Closure/Vacation plan for the District.

Harvest and Habitat Model development – Continued participation in the development and application of this model for the Southwest Oregon District is anticipated in fiscal year 2006.

Northern Spotted Owl Habitat Analysis – The development of Northern Spotted Owl habitat analyses will continue to occupy large blocks of time in the planning process. Approximately 240,000 acres were completed in previous fiscal years and an additional 50,000 acres should be completed in fiscal year 2006.

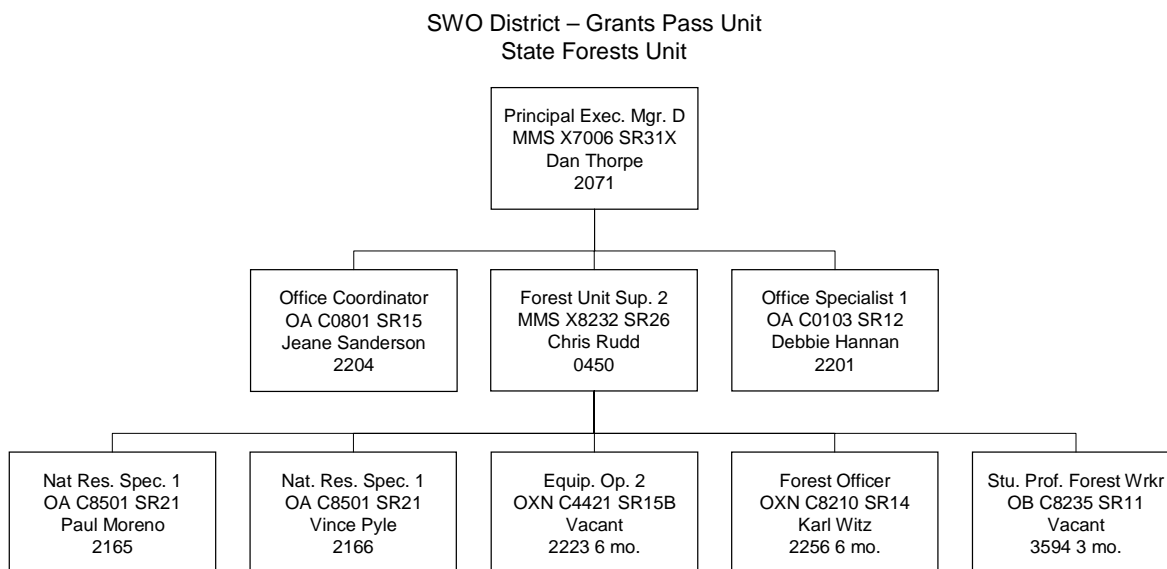
Habitat Conservation Plan – Further development of the Habitat Conservation Plan is also anticipated in FY 2006 which will require District personnel to act in an advisory role.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

With the continued interest and debate in natural resource management, and the steady decline in the number of professionals in this field in Southwest Oregon, public calls to the District for information are ever increasing. It is the intent of the Southwest Oregon District to continue to serve the public by addressing their questions and concerns regarding the management of the State's natural resources. As such, the District will continue to participate in college and high school career days. Also, continuing participation in local tree planting activities is anticipated. In addition, requests for presentations or interviews on forest management and fire safety occur sporadically and the District will continue to support these interpretive outreach opportunities.

ADMINISTRATION

The Southwest Oregon District State Forests Unit is staffed by 1 FUS2, 2 full-time permanent NRS1's, 1 Forest Officer who works 6 months in the State Forest program and 6 months in the Protection From Fire program and 1 Equipment Operator who works 6 months in the State Forest program and 6 months in the Protection From Fire program. Currently, the FUS2 coordinates the timber sale program and the reforestation and young stand management programs. One NRS1 provides oversight for the roads and engineering projects. The other NRS1 coordinates the GIS program for the District and collects stand information for monitoring and timber sale purposes as well as compiling the information necessary to submit the Annual Operations Plans. This organizational structure meets the goals set in the Southwest Oregon District Implementation Plan – March 2003 and the Southwest Oregon District 2006 Annual Operations Plan by assuring the level of specialization necessary to competently accomplish the detailed objectives while remaining within budgeted staffing levels.



APPENDICES

A. Summary Tables

B. Pre-Operations Reports

C. Public Involvement