

Pre-Operations Report

Operation Name: Grasslands Thinning

County: Clatsop

Management Basin: Buster

Table 1. Operation Areas, Types and Acres

Area	Type of Operation	Gross Acres	Net Acres
1	Partial Cut - Moderate	241	220
2	Partial Cut - Moderate	134	118
Total		375	338

I. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION AREA:

These sale areas are located on gentle and moderate sideslopes above tributaries to Buster Creek and Deep Creek. Both sale areas are located in the Buster Basin. The sale is underlain by sedimentary rocks of the informal Jewell member of the Keasey Formation, the Cowlitz Formation, and the informal Sager Creek Formation, mudstone and sandstone with some volcanic tuff.

All sale areas are within the western hemlock vegetation zone. Site indices for the Pittsburg soils averages 140 feet (I-) for Douglas-fir and 110 feet (III+) for western hemlock. Site indices for the Tillamook soils averages 140 feet (I-) for Douglas-fir and 110 feet (III+) for western hemlock.

The harvest units are situated on separate north/south running ridges, with east and west facing slopes, with some small finger ridges running east and west.

II. CURRENT STAND CONDITION:

Area 1: The current stands are generally 31 to 46 years old, and are composed primarily of small sized Douglas-fir, to some scattered clumps of large sized Douglas-fir. The stand is categorized as 90% Closed Single Canopy and 10% Understory, and the stand density is between 25 and 63.

Area 2: The current stands are composed of 36 year old small sized Douglas-fir. The stand is categorized as 87% Understory and 13% Closed Single Canopy, and the stand density index is between 25 and 48.

In the majority of the sale areas, there is little understory development due to the dense stocking. Understory development consists primarily of sword fern, vinemapple, huckleberry, and salmonberry.

The existing amount of snags and large woody debris is not known at this time. Evaluation of existing snags and large woody debris will be conducted during actual sale layout.

Table 2. Stand Inventory Information

Area	Prescription	Stand ID ¹	Species	Age	DBH	BA	TPA	SDI	Acres ²
1	PC - M	1854	DF	46	17	303	200	75	8
		1858	DF	36	9	148	359	48	46
		1872	DF	36	10	84	157	25	55
		1892	DF	32	12	222	284	63	15
		1893	DF	32	13	186	208	51	57
		1921	DF	31	12	188	222	52	39
		Target ³	DF		14	90-110	105	25-30	220
2	PC - M	1858	DF	35	9	148	359	48	18
		1872	DF	35	10	84	157	25	100
		Target ³	DF		12	90-110	112	25-30	118

¹ The source of stand inventory information is OSCUR from 2002. Age shown is as of 2005.

² The acres are based on GIS and exclude roads, streams buffers, reserve areas, etc.

³ The Target identifies expected stand characteristics (DBH, BA, TPA and SDI) after harvesting has been completed.

III. DESIRED STAND CONDITION/VISION:

The goal is to set the stage for future attainment of Older Forest Structure as quickly as possible, and for the benefits of thinning to last as long as possible, to forestall the return of Closed Single Canopy. Development of long and broad crowns, large limbs, and large tree diameter are immediate goals. Growth of existing understory and additional natural understory regeneration are also immediate goals. Conversion of part of the future large-tree component to snags, broken-top trees, and down material through natural events is a future goal. A second partial cutting entry will likely be necessary in 15-20 years to keep the stands on the pathway of development to “older forest structure” stands.

Table 3. Stand Structure Information

Area	Stand ID	Current	Post Harvest ¹	Desired Future	Acres
1	1854	CSC	UDS	OFS	8
	1858	CSC	UDS	OFS	46
	1872	UDS	UDS	OFS	55
	1892	CSC	UDS	OFS	15
	1893	CSC	UDS	OFS	57
	1921	CSC	UDS	OFS	39
	2	1858	CSC	UDS	OFS
1872		UDS	UDS	OFS	100

¹ The stand is expected to develop into this condition in the five to ten years after this operation is completed.

IV. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION:

Areas 1 and 2: The sale is designed to commercially thin from below to a stand density index (SDI) of 25-30. An effort will be made to retain all minor species, that is, all species except Douglas-fir. Douglas-fir to be thinned will include trees 8" dbh and greater. A top end diameter limit (~18"-20" dbh) will also be implemented. Hemlock will be reserved. A few patch cuts not to exceed two acres in size will be conducted in both sale areas to create variability in the stand.

A portion of Area 1 is within the Strum Creek NSO home range. This area consists primarily of 33 to 36 year old timber. Under the "Agreement for the Conservation of Northern Spotted Owls," commonly referred to as the "Strum Creek Agreement," harvesting of stands over age 40 that are within the Strum Creek NSO home range is not allowed. At the time of harvest, portions of this sale area may be over 40 years old.

For all harvesting activities, all existing snags will be retained unless deemed to be safety hazards. It is anticipated that additional snags will develop during harvesting activities by leaving, topping or girdling damaged rub trees, tail lift trees, and/or intermediate support trees(FMP, "Landscape Management Strategy 3c. Snags", pages 4-53 and 4-54). The feasibility and safety of topping some trees while not limbing them will be investigated. If this practice is determined to be safe and feasible then several snags of this type will be created.

Down woody debris levels are anticipated to be below stand target levels for OFS. It is unrealistic to expect that the target levels will be achieved with this entry. Efforts will be made to leave as much downed wood that is created from the harvest activities within the unit. This will be accomplished through topping trees and bucking out cull sections within the unit. During all harvesting activities, all existing down woody debris will be retained.

It is also anticipated that natural snag and down wood recruitment will occur post harvest over time due to natural occurrences.

V. ESTIMATED TIMBER AND REVENUE INFORMATION:

Table 4. Timber and Revenue

Ownership		Sale Type	
BOF	CSL	Cash	Recovery
100%	%	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Planned Quarter		4 th	

	Conifer	Hardwood	Total
Net Volume (MBF)	2,028	0	2,028
Stumpage Value (\$/MBF)	\$250	\$0	
Estimated Gross Value	\$507,000	\$0	\$507,000
	Project Costs:		\$93,000
	Estimated Net Value:		\$414,000

VI. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND HARVESTING:

Access to the harvest site will be Highway 202 to Jones Road to East Sager Creek Road to Grasslands Road. Approximately 2.7 miles of new road will be constructed for harvest purposes. The road in Area 1 may serve as the main collector road for the Grasslands area in the future. This sale will not complete the tie-through portion with Sager Creek. It will likely be completed at a later date. Road improvement is planned on a portion of the Grasslands Road at this time. Future road maintenance inventories may indicate further road improvement needs for sale access.

The sale will have cable-yarding settings as well as ground yarding areas. These areas were determined from analysis of the terrain and landing locations. Existing roads will be utilized as much as possible for logging the sale areas.

There are no out-of-sale projects attached to this sale at this time.

Table 5. Transportation Planning Summary (Miles).

Activity	Mainline	Collector	Rocked Spur	Dirt Spur
Construction	0	1.2	0	1.5
Improvement	0	1.5	0	0
Maintenance	0	5.7	0	0
Close/Block	0	0	0	0
Vacating	0	0	0	1.5

VII. AQUATIC RESOURCES AND WATER QUALITY:

Type F and Domestic Use Streams: The headwaters of Buster Creek, a Type F stream, is located adjacent to the west and southwest boundary of **Area 1** for a distance of approximately 5,200 feet. A tributary of Buster Creek is adjacent to the east boundary of **Area 1** for a distance of 5,900 feet, and is adjacent to the west boundary of **Area 2** for a distance of 3,300 feet. The tributary is classified as a Type F south of Grasslands Road. There are no known domestic water systems associated with this sale.

Aquatic Resource Protection: Buster Creek contains listed fish (Coho, Fall Chinook, and Winter Steelhead). All sale areas are within the Buster Creek Salmon Anchor Habitat Area. These areas shall receive aquatic resource protection in accordance with the standards contained in the Northwest State Forest Management Plan, Implementation Plan, and SAH strategies.

Log hauling activities may be conducted over Buster Creek, therefore, per ODF's Salmon Protection Policy for State Forest Operations, contract provisions will be included to reduce the likelihood of adverse effects on listed fish. Specific standards will include: (1) hauling on roads which are in proximity to streams in which "listed" fish are present would only be allowed during weather conditions and use levels commensurate with the capabilities of road drainage systems and; (2) implementation of riparian management area strategies in accordance with the FMP, Appendix J, "Management Standards for Aquatic and Riparian Areas", pages J-1 through J-16, for perennial Type N streams that are within 500 feet of streams in which listed fish are present.

Type N Streams: There are small perennial Type N streams within both sale areas.

In addition all streams will be examined to determine stream type and classification during sale layout, and then the specific riparian management area strategies required in the FMP will be implemented. The FMP riparian management area strategies that will be implemented are found in the FMP, Appendix J, "Management Standards for Aquatic and Riparian Areas", pages J-1 through J-16.

There may be an opportunity to perform stream enhancement work in Buster Creek. Further assessment and collaboration will be done with ODFW biologists and the Jewell Unit Forester. If any in-stream work is done with this sale, then it will be conducted during in-stream periods established by ODFW.

VIII. T&E SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS:

All of Area 1 and approximately 100 acres of Area 2 are within the Jewell Owl Cluster, and the Salmon Anchor Habitat boundaries. A Preliminary Biological Assessment has been completed since a portion of Area 1 falls within the Strum

Creek Northern Spotted Owl home range and some timber in this portion may reach age 40 at the time of harvest. A field review was conducted with USFWS during the summer of 2005 to evaluate current stand conditions and discuss prescriptive options for long term habitat improvements for northern spotted owls. A modification to the "Agreement for the Conservation of Northern Spotted Owls" has been agreed upon with the USFWS.

Thinning of these stands is being done in order to keep them on a pathway toward OFS, ensuring that they will become suitable NSO habitat. This objective is aligned with the draft HCP cluster goal of "thinning in young plantations of non-suitable habitat (20-40 year old stands)" in an effort to accelerate the development of suitable habitat to "enhance the viability of all spotted owl sites within the cluster."

The ODF Northwest Area Biologist determined on April 19, 2004 that none of the sale areas contained suitable habitat for Marbled Murrelets.

The sale areas were surveyed to proper protocol for northern spotted owls in 2004 and 2005 with no detections.

This sale area was checked against district knowledge for any listed plant location. The sale area was also checked against the Oregon Natural Heritage Program (OHNP) database of known listed plant locations. No listed plant records were identified with the sale area.

IX. SLOPE STABILITY AND GEOTECHNICAL ISSUES:

The topographic map indicates that there are no high landslide hazard locations within the sale area. The risk to tributaries of Buster Creek and Deep Creek is low.

No stability issues were noticed during initial reconnaissance of the sale areas. The geotechnical specialist may be consulted if concerns arise during sale layout.

X. RECREATION RESOURCES:

This area receives dispersed recreation, which includes hunting, fishing, camping, target shooting, and driving forest roads. The Clatsop State Forest Recreation Plan does not list any specific activities for this portion of the basin.

XI. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

No known cultural resources within or adjacent to the operation.

XII. SCENIC RESOURCES:

The sale area is in a landscape of low visual sensitivity (Level 3)

XIII. OTHER RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS:

No private property lines are within the sale areas. No land surveying will be needed.

XIV. LAND MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY:

Area 1 has 220 acres located within the Jewell Northern Spotted Owl Cluster and will be managed as per the Northwest Management plan for these areas. Fifteen acres of Area 1 is within the male Strum Creek Northern Spotted Owl homerange. Fifty-one acres of Area 1 is within the female Strum Creek Northern Spotted Owl homerange. Forty acres of Area 1 is a progeny site that is no longer being monitored. See Section IV, Proposed Management Prescriptions, for the management guidelines to be utilized.

All 118 acres of Area 2 falls within the Northern Spotted Owl proposed cluster boundary and will be managed as per the Northwest Management plan for these areas.

All sale areas are within the Buster Creek Salmon Anchor Habitat Area. See Section VII, Aquatic Resources and Water Quality, for the management guidelines to be utilized.

Boundary lines depicted on Attachment C are approximate; exact locations and site specific management activities will be determined during the sale preparation process.