

**ODOT Wildwood to Wemme Highway 26 Widening Project**  
**BLM input for Red Tree Voles**  
**3/28/2006**

The habitat was evaluated for the feasibility of red tree vole surveys. Due to the lack of visibility into the tree crowns, tree climbing would be required to more fully evaluate whether red tree voles are present. Of the 70 trees that would be removed, approximately 30 trees would need to be climbed. The Area of Potential Impact (API) on BLM lands is small, approximately 1.2 acres in size. The API consists of a small strip of trees between Highway 26 and rural residential neighborhoods. It is located in the Middle Sandy River Watershed on the very west edge of the red tree vole's range in the West Cascades of Oregon. In the 1996 Upper Sandy Watershed Analysis for the Middle and Upper Sandy River, a habitat model for the red tree vole was developed and used to create a map of red tree vole habitat on the Mount Hood National Forest. In that model, primary habitat includes stands classified as large conifer greater than 300 acres which occur at less than 3,000 feet in the Western Hemlock or Pacific Silver Fir vegetation zones. Secondary habitat requirements are the same, except size of habitat is 75 to 300 acres. Marginal habitat includes closed small conifer stands, less than 3,000 ft. in elevation, greater than 75 acres within the same two vegetation zones. The conifer stand on BLM lands in the API does not meet the definitions for primary, secondary or marginal habitat. Due to its small size, location on the fringe of the red tree vole's range adjacent to the Willamette Valley, and the rural residential setting adjacent to a major State highway, this stand is not considered to be high priority red tree vole habitat and overall, impacts are insignificant. In the unlikely circumstance that red tree voles are present in this small stand, it represents a sink area and is not expected to contribute to population viability of this species. Due to the urgency of the purpose and need for highway widening for public safety and the insignificance of impacts to red tree vole, tree climbing to verify the presence of red tree voles was not conducted.