



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Clackamas River
Ranger District,
Mt. Hood
National Forest

595 NW Industrial Way
Estacada, OR 97023
(503) 630-6861
FAX # (503) 630-2299

File Code: 1920

Date: November 13, 2007

Dear Interested Party:

The Clackamas River Ranger District is conducting an analysis of plantation thinning opportunities. The Upper Clack Thin project is located in the Upper Clackamas River watershed in T.6 S., R.6 E.; T.6 S., R.7 E.; T.7 S., R.7 E.; T.7 S., R.8 E.; T.8 S., R.7 E.; Willamette Meridian.

A group of key stakeholders who refer to themselves as the Clackamas Stewardship Partners (CSP) suggested that the District move forward collaboratively with restoration thinning in this area. The project involves the thinning of plantations that are between 42 and 55 years old. It will eventually be split into several timber sales or stewardship projects.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this initiative is to thin second-growth plantations to achieve multiple objectives:

Riparian Reserves - This action is needed because these plantations occur in riparian reserves and because the current vegetation does not meet the needs of associated aquatic and riparian resources. If no action is taken in these riparian reserves, stands would have reduced capability to produce the size and quantity of coarse woody debris sufficient to sustain physical complexity and stability of the riparian reserves and associated streams. Plantations can be enhanced by thinning to accelerate the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions.

Late-Successional Reserves - This action is needed because these plantations occur in late-successional reserves and because the current vegetation does not meet the needs of dependent species. If no action is taken in these reserves, stands would be delayed in their acquisition of desired habitat characteristics. Plantations can be enhanced by thinning to accelerate the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions.

Diversity - This action is needed because these plantations lack certain elements of diversity. They do not have the mix of tree species that were present in the original stand and they are relatively uniform in terms of tree size and spacing. There is a need for greater variability of vertical and horizontal stand structure. There is a need for more sunlight on the forest floor to create greater diversity of ground vegetation and to increase the quantity and palatability of forage plants. If no action is taken, over time the stands would become increasingly dense resulting in a period of low structural diversity that could last more than 100 years. Diversity would continue to decrease if no action is taken. If no action is taken, species such as deer and elk that require more open stands for foraging would decline.

Health and Growth - This action is needed because these second-growth plantations are experiencing a slowing of growth due to overcrowding and some are experiencing suppression caused mortality. If no action is taken, this overstocked condition would result in stands with reduced vigor and increased mortality. There is a need for forest stands in the matrix that are healthy and vigorous with low levels of mortality.



Forest Products - One of the purposes of this project is to provide forest products consistent with the Northwest Forest Plan goal of maintaining the stability of local and regional economies. This action is needed to supply forest products in a cost effective manner. There is a need to keep forests healthy and productive to sustainably provide forest products in the matrix in the future. Not only are forest products needed by society, but also the employment created is important to local and regional economies.

Proposed Action

The action proposed by the Clackamas Stewardship Partners and the Forest Service is to thin and harvest wood fiber from approximately 1100 acres of plantations. The plantations occur in various land allocations including matrix, late-successional reserves and the dry upland portion of riparian reserves. Variable density thinning would enhance diversity. Late-successional reserves and riparian reserves would be thinned to accelerate the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions. Approximately 1/3 mile of new temporary road would be constructed. In addition, one mile of system roads would be decommissioned.

Further details and Maps are available on the Mt. Hood Forest web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/> in the Projects & Plans section.

Questions or comments may be directed to:

Mail: Jim Roden
Estacada Ranger Station
595 NW Industrial Way
Estacada, OR 97023

Email: jroden@fs.fed.us

Phone: 503.630.8722

I am requesting your comments concerning this project. If you have any site-specific knowledge or concerns about the proposed actions, please bring them to our attention. The more specific you are, the better we will be able to address issues important to you in our environmental analysis process. Please submit your responses by December 3, 2007.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

/s/ Andrei Rykoff

Andrei Rykoff
District Ranger

Note: Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.