



File Code: 1920  
Date: May 6, 2002

Dear Interested Party:

The Clackamas River Ranger District is conducting an analysis of thinning opportunities.

**Thinning - Matrix**

There are many second-growth stands that are experiencing a slowing of growth due to overcrowding. If left unaltered, this overstocked condition would result in stands with reduced vigor, increased mortality and increased wind damage susceptibility. There is a need for forest stands that are healthy and vigorous with low levels of mortality and wind susceptibility.

At the landscape level, young stands that once provided high quality forage are rapidly becoming crowded, contributing to a trend of declining forage for deer and elk. If left unaltered, forage would continue to decline across the landscape to the detriment of deer and elk. There is a need, at the landscape level, for high quality forage for deer and elk.

The objectives are: 1) to increase health and vigor and enhance growth that results in larger wind firm trees; 2) to enhance forage for deer and elk; 3) to manage for forest conditions that contribute to the watersheds ability to provide for the long-term sustained production of high quality water; and 4) to provide wood fiber for local and regional economies.

The proposed action is to thin and harvest wood fiber. Some temporary roads would need to be constructed or reconstructed to access landings (they would be obliterated upon completion). On areas proposed for thinning, the prescription would be adjusted in certain key areas to increase forage for deer and elk. This would involve wider tree spacing and/or the inclusion of small openings to get increased sunlight to the forest floor. Shrub planting, grass seeding and nutritional supplementation would also occur in these areas. Below are two photos; one of a proposed thinning area and one showing a similar stand that has already been thinned.



## **Thinning - Riparian**

Within the planning area, there are some stands of overcrowded second-growth trees in riparian reserves that currently do not contain the level of vegetative and structural diversity associated with mature and late-successional forests. (Riparian Reserves are areas along streams and include the stream, the stream banks, wet seeps and the dry slopes extending one to two tree heights away.) Mature or late-successional forest conditions are essential to maintaining habitat for aquatic and riparian-dependent species. If left unaltered, this overstocked condition would result in stands of small diameter trees with poor live crown development, increased wind damage susceptibility, and a substantial delay in the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions. These 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. These stands would also have a reduced capability to provide for connectivity between and within watersheds. There is a need for mature and late-successional stands within the riparian reserves.

The objective is to create stand conditions within the riparian reserves that would accelerate the development of mature and late-successional stand conditions. Another objective is to manage for forest conditions that contribute to the watersheds ability to provide for the long-term sustained production of high quality water.

The proposed action is to silviculturally treat the dry portions of riparian reserves using a combination of thinning, small openings and leaving untreated areas. Wood fiber would be harvested.

## **Fertilization of Thinned Stands in the Matrix**

Some of stands that would be thinned in the matrix could benefit from the addition of nitrogen fertilizer. Nitrogen is a key element that is capable of increasing the health, vigor and indirectly, the wind firmness of forest stands. Without this treatment, stand growth potential would not be optimized. With treatment stand growth would be increased by approximately 5% to 12%. There is a need for forest stands that are healthy, vigorous and less susceptible to wind damage. The objective is to increase the health, vigor and growth of the residual trees by increasing root mass and expanding leaf area. The proposed action is to aerially apply 200 pounds of nitrogen per acre within three years of the completion of commercial thinning.

## Summary

It is anticipated that four environmental assessments will be developed; one for each of the following watersheds. Acreage and mileage are approximate.

	<b>South Fork Clackamas</b>	<b>Upper Clackamas</b>	<b>Oak Grove</b>	<b>Collawash</b>	<b>Total</b>
Thin - Matrix	402 ac.	530 ac.	699 ac.	147 ac.	1778 ac.
Thin - Riparian Reserve	118 ac.	165 ac.	267 ac.	186 ac.	736 ac.
Thin - Total	520 ac.	695 ac.	966 ac.	333 ac.	2514 ac.
Temp Rd. - Matrix	0.2 mi.	0.7 mi.	2.7 mi.	0.5 mi.	4.1 mi.
Forage – Matrix *	0	293 ac.	213 ac.	76 ac.	582 ac.
Fertilize – Matrix *	350 ac.	460 ac.	546 ac.	89 ac.	1445 ac.

\*The Forage and Fertilize acres are subsets of the acres listed under Thin – Matrix.

Detailed descriptions are available that elaborate on the purpose, need and proposed action. Maps are available as well as photos of the proposed thinning opportunities and photos of some similar stands that have been thinned in the recent past.

They are available on the Mt. Hood Web site at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mthood/projects.htm>

Questions may be directed to:

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I am requesting your comments concerning these projects. 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 June 15, 2002.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Jeff Walter*  
Jeff P. Walter

## 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. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who only submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.