



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Mt. Hood National Forest

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File Code: 1950

Date: May 9, 2005

Dear Interested and Affected Person or Agency:

The Decision Notice signed on September 21, 1998 to proceed with the Polallie Cooper Planning Area Environmental Assessment is hereby withdrawn. This project was located on the Hood River Ranger District and included 3 timber sales, Tartan, Clan, and Kilt. No contracts have been awarded for these timber sales and no logging has occurred.

The reason I am withdrawing this decision is that conditions on the ground have changed considerably since the time these timber sales were planned in 1998. The original silviculture prescriptions were designed to improve forest health by thinning overly dense stands of trees that were susceptible to insects and disease. The prescriptions were designed to leave the healthier disease resistant trees and remove trees that were overcrowded and susceptible to insects and disease. A significant number of the trees designated for removal are lodgepole pine. In the last two years mountain pine beetle activity has increased to the point where most if not all of the lodgepole pine is now dead. Insect activity has also increased in the true fir component in these stands and has resulted in additional mortality. The original management objectives and silviculture prescriptions no longer fit with the current conditions. In addition, because of the large loss of timber volume and value, the timber cruise and appraisal values are no longer valid. The timber sale units as presently marked are not economically viable because of the rapid rate of decay in lodgepole pine and true fir.

There is no new proposal now in existence for the Polallie Cooper planning area. But now that the 1998 decision is withdrawn, District planning staff are again investigating this planning area for problems or opportunities that may lead to a new proposal for action. If a new proposal is made it will be subject to a new open and public environmental analysis process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and will involve all interested parties.

The timber sales in the Polallie Cooper project are the subject of litigation in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. The case is Bark, et al. v. Larsen, et al., CV 02-904-HU. The existence of this litigation had no bearing on my decision to withdraw the Polallie Cooper project. The Polallie Cooper project is permanently withdrawn without regard to what may transpire in this litigation.

Anyone interested in the Polallie Cooper planning area should contact Erin Black on the Hood River Ranger District. Erin can be reached at (541) 352-6002 or by email: ekblack@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,


GARY L. LARSEN
Forest Supervisor



